A. T. ARIYARATNE
COLLECTED WORKS

VOLUME V

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
TARLOK SINGH

A Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Publication

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A. T. ARIYARATNE

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Tarlok Singh

SARVODAYA
VISHVA LEKHA
Publishers

41 Lumbini Avenue Ratmalana
Sri Lanka : 1999

Collected Works Vol. 5 (A5)
A.T. Ariyaratne

First edition September 1991
Second edition May 1999
©Copyright Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement
ISBN 955-599-146-4

Printed and bound in Sri Lanka
by

SARVODAYA
VISHVA LEKHA
Printers

41 Lumbini Avenue Ratmalana
(Vishva Lekha, an Income Generating Project
for Sarvodaya Village Development Services.)

CONTENTS

- Preface
- Introduction
- Professionals and NGOs as Partners in National Development in a Participatory Democracy – 1
- The Need for a Holistic Vision in the Global Struggle for Justice and Peace through Development 25
- Political Institutions and Traditional Morality 43
- Literacy and Sustainable Development 65
- Technology and Rural Transformation 79
- Village Re-awakening and Individual Rights 103
- The World's Religions for The World's Children . 111
- Our Common Future: A Liberated Personality in a Liberated Society 121
- Literacy and Peace Education 133
- The Vision of a New Society 139
- Harmonising Processes and Persons with Programmes and Structures to Build a No-Poverty Society 163
- Transformation of Vision into Reality-Planning for Development (Awakening) 191
- Community Education for a Learning Society in the Context of Asian Heritage 215
- 1990 Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values 229

PREFACE

As one who has had the good fortune of working with Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, and even taking down in long hand the text of some of the discussion papers and speeches reproduced in this Volume, I am honoured to write this preface to what is perhaps the most universalist of Dr. Ariyaratne's writing up to date. Here we see him challenge the most basic assumptions we make about the global purpose of development and suggest alternatives. His goal we see is Enlightenment, for individuals and for the world. The themes of decentralisation, self-reliance and people's participation are recurring ones.

But this is not airy-fairy stuff although it goes in an opposite direction to most of mainstream thinking. Dr. Ariyaratne's fluidity in expressing ideas is matched by the enthusiasm of the poor and disadvantaged in Sri Lankan society to absorb it. As a result he has been able to build up a country-wide people's movement which is easily the largest of its kind in Sri Lanka and perhaps in the world.

It is only to be expected that a movement as popular and visionary as Sarvodaya would clash with vested interests. At the time of writing, the Movement and Dr. Ariyaratne in particular, are facing a sustained campaign against them by the government controlled press and other governmental machinery. Dr. Ariyaratne's response to this in a public statement issued on May 1, 1991 is indicative of his pursuit of the nobler dimensions of life.

"We will not be intimidated into getting involved in party and power politics as we believe in people's participatory

democracy with the highest respect for fundamental human rights. Neither will we be revengeful nor antagonistic towards those who harass us. Sarvodaya is the awakening of all including those who vilify and try to destroy us. May all beings be well and happy." Such is the man whose inner glow is hard to subdue or resist.

The Vishva Lekha Press is an income generating project of Sarvodaya. Technological sophistication can work in partnership with a basic need strategy provided the spirit of service is present. A special word of thanks is due to the Staff of Vishva Lekha Press whose dedication and hardwork resulted in the production of this volume.

Jehan Perera
Sarvodaya Headquarters,
Moratuwa.

May 8, 1991

INTRODUCTION

News of Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka first reached me some twenty years ago. For fifteen years, since we first met, Ari and I have been bound in friendship, spending long hours with each other in his home and with his family at Moratuwa and in Delhi as opportunities came. In 1978, I was able to spend a day visiting a few villages in the company of his son and get a personal feel of Shramadana work. The privilege to say a few words by way of introduction to the fifth volume of Ari's *Collected Works,* even though no such words are needed from any one other than Ari himself, has been given to me only as act of friendship. In turn, this has led me to go back to much else that has come from Ari's pen over the past twenty years and has been said by others about Sarvodaya. Naturally, I felt benefited by gaining clearer understanding of the larger significance of the movement of thought and action whose seeds were sown in an inspired moment more than thirty three years ago in Kanatoluwa, a village inhabited by Rodiyas, a backward community, some 100 miles north of Colombo.

Little did the young science teacher who had thrown himself into the work of the Social Service League of Nalanda College know that he was lighting a beneficient lamp whose glow would spread far and wide. Did not the mendicant astrologer from India tell Ari's mother on the third day after his birth, to wit, on the evening of the fifth of November 1931, that the young child would not enter the priesthood, but would serve humanity as a layman. And so it has been, since those early days in Nalanda, with Ari's mind and heart moving with each passing year from the village to the nation, serving all people with equal devotion, whether they be Sinhalese, Tamil or Muslim, and from the

nation to all humanity. In the midst of this journey, because the soil of India had been once made sacred by the footsteps of Buddha and, many centuries later, by the labours of Gandhi, Ari has felt as close to India as he has to the land of his birth and, overlooking the failings of both, has looked beyond the present to the future, not only of their people, but of the entire human race.

Ari's *Collected Writings,* perhaps more correctly *Selected Writings,* are in the nature of reflections and interpretations and efforts, as it were, to take stock of what had been done and learnt through Sarvodaya and the wider paths to which it might point. But they cover only a part of what Ari has spoken and written. The first three volumes carried valuable Introductions from Nandasena Ratnapala, with his rich background of work with the Sarvodaya Research Institute. The first volume contained presentations made by Ari mainly during 1977-78, along with three prepared in the early seventies. The second volume picked out presentations made mainly during 1978-79, with two going back to 1968 and 1972. The third offered out some presentations made during the years 1981-85, including the People's Declaration for National Peace and Harmony of October 1983 and the Statement of December 1983 on the Peace Walk to Evoke Humanity. These latter were symbols of Ari's faith in the human spirit and determination to turn the prevailing gloom and tragedy into creative social energy to build a new future for all the people of Sri Lanka. Ari could not proceed far with his immediate endeavours, but aspirations like his are not to be judged by success or failure. As he said in those trying days of late 1983, when each person stood to be counted, he was proud to call himself a Sinhalese because he was 'taught to think in terms of the entire living world' and 'if a Sinhalese thinks in terms of Sinhalese and a Tamil, he is only a Sinhalese in label and not in the spirit'. 'Just imagine', he went on to say, 'what a beautiful society we can make out of this diversity if we can bring about a unity where the essence of all cultures is brought together?' The

true votary of Sarvodaya, whether described as 'Awakening', as in the Buddhist tradition, or, after Gandhi, as the 'Welfare of all', which includes the 'Welfare of the least' **(Antyodaya)**, becomes, by the nature of his commitment, the Universal Man. The epithet goes well with Ari. The fourth volume of Ari's writings, carrying as Introduction of deep insight from professor Ralph Bultjens, provided selections from writings over the period 1985 to early 1989. The present volume has three presentations offered by Ari during 1989-90 in Sri Lanka and eleven in other countries, an indication that foreign requests to hear about his work and philosophy from his own lips are tending to increase.

Altogether, it may be said, that only a portion of what Ari has thought and felt over the years has yet become widely available. For some one from India or Sri Lanka, his message comes out most clearly when he is speaking to his own people, perhaps even in the native tongue. Therefore, it would be a worthwhile effort to reach out to his formative utterances and writings of the earlier years, specially the sixties, when he was more face to face with the people in the villages, discovering himself and, through simple and homely words and images, helping them to discover themselves and their own potential for constructive endeavour. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has travelled a long way from the hundred villages it hoped to serve in 1969 to 200 villages in 1970, 1000 in 1975, 2000 in 1977, and the present range of some 8000 villages (out of a total of 23000 in Sri Lanka) held together by some 30,000 workers of the movement. Growth and expansion hold their own perils, as no one knows better than Ari himself. The way to the future may lie only in part through the process of decentralization accompanied by creation of autonomous service agencies equipped with professional and skilled persons. There may be need also consciously to dismantle large structures and explore new ways of releasing the energies of the people in the villages for creative innovation, self-reliance and independent and even defiant action.

The Sarvodaya movement is unique in many ways. It is no small gain that a third of the villages served by it lie in Tamil-speaking parts of Sri Lanka. The movement has grown through its capacity and the capacity of its leaders in the villages, young and of middle age, to learn from the people, to live with them, to work with faith for their well-being, and to maintain their direction in the midst of difficulties and pressures. As Ari has said, the rural people, with all their physical and mental energies, with their culture and traditions, are fully capable of transforming their life and society, but young leaders from their midst, with purpose, initiative and training are also needed to bring about a total revolution in the countryside. Through the years, the foundations have been well laid, the principles of organisation evolved by Sarvodaya, owing not a little to the genius and originality of Ari himself, are sound, the inspiration from the teachings of Buddha remains an abiding influence over the mind and behaviour of the people and, given a reasonably favourable climate of public policy, the future holds vast possibilities. The stage may well have been reached when the people in the villages could be encouraged to break away even from successful organisational patterns of the past and seek new answers for themselves.

With the years, one can perceive that what Ari once described as Sarvodaya Thought as distinguished from Sarvodaya Action now fills his mind more and more. Therefore, his message takes on a global dimension, issues of World Peace and Sustainble Environment coming to the forefront equally with the condition of the people in remote and far-flung villages and the difficult times through which Sri Lanka has passed in these recent years. As Ari said in 1989 in his New Year Message to the Sarvodaya Family, we must ever think of those who are at the lowest levels of society. Sarvodaya's goal is the awakening of all and just social structures have to be built to create a system of material production in harmony with nature and to generate spiritual strength within the people. To one who values Ari's

work as a gift, equally for Sri Lanka and India and the people of South Asia and other lands with similar needs, the fifth volume of his writings also seems to be a call to Ari himself to return more completely to work among his own people.

With greater personal detachment from burdens of organisation and planning for a vast movement, travelling as Gandhi did in Noakhali, Ari might well strike deeper layers of soil among the simple rural folk of Sri Lanka, and come to visions and achievements that can yet be only expressed vaguely in words. In his more recent writings, he has often turned to Gandhi's idiom and example and felt closer bonds with Gandhi's work in India. These bonds belong to a rich world of harmony which Sri Lanka and India have the good fortune to share. As the poet Satyendranath Datta of Bengal (1882-1922) said in a famous poem dedicated to Sri Lanka.

That Sinhala Isle,
  Beautiful, dark and pure
Cloves garland her neck
  Frank-incense perfumes her hair
Golden is her glory
  And Pearl white is her soul
The name of Buddha
  And quest of Salvation
Inspire her life.

Tarlok Singh

February 1991

Professionals and NGOs as Partners in National Development in a Participatory Democracy

I am thankful to the Organisation of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka for inviting me to speak at this Workshop on "Professionals and NGOs – Partners in National Development in a Participatory Democracy". The subject you have entrusted to me is "National Priorities for Human Resources Development with particular reference to the Janasaviya Programme".

With regard to the broader theme, I am impressed by the fact that you have brought into focus a number of important role players in the development drama such as the Government, Professionals and NGOs. To bring them together as partners in national development in what is called a participatory democracy is certainly a very worthy object for reflection and study. Today I hope to express my thoughts on the theme of national priorities for human resources development; but I am not sufficiently knowledgeable or competent to talk on the details of the Janasaviya Programme launched by the Government. Mr. Susil Siriwardene will have to deal with it as he is the best suited to this task. I thought it more appropriate to express my thoughts on the theme as a whole while making reference to sub-topics as they come up.

What you are proposing to do is something like a marriage ceremony. Before a marriage is solemnized it is very important to have an understanding between the partners. They must know each other truly and well if the marriage is to last long. The ceremonial arena (the Poruwa) for the wedding is what is called national development. The matrimonial laws and procedures under which the marriage has to take place are known as participatory democracy. It is also very essential to have some understanding about all these to make it a success. I would like to make some introductory remarks about these actors, the stage and the laws governing this marriage play.

The Partners

What are NGOs? Generally they are organisations outside the governmental structure trying to improve the quality of life of the people and their living environment by actively participating in numerous development and welfare programmes or in those social actions like advocacy programmes related to various issues pertaining to human welfare and development.

Fortunately or unfortunately, there are all kinds of non-governmental organisations. Some are very big NGOs or BINGOS. Perhaps I may be representing one such BINGO. Then there are expatriate non-governmental organisations, which may be called ENGOS, some of which co-operate and others compete with indigenous organisations. Yet there is a new category of NGOs, a sort of governmental NGOs which are promoted by politicians and their family members with not only altruistic but also political motives. One may call these GONGOS. Then there are the international NGOs which can be called INGOS. Like that we can go on thinking about all kinds of non-governmental organisations. So it is not an easy task to find out what a true NGO is and what it is not. So the choice of NGO marriage partners is bound to pose serious problems.

Now, let us think of the other partner – the professionals. Who is a professional? What is a professional association? What are the objectives of these associations? Who are the professionals who are represented in these associations? To what extent are their professional interests in harmony with the interests of the vast majority of ordinary people or the country in general? What are the other important and constructive professions or occupations that are not represented in an organised way in the Organisation of Professional Associations in Sri Lanka? For example how are they related to farmers, craftsmen, rubber tappers, tea pluckers, fishermen and so on? Would you call them professionals? Can they be represented as equals with your

Association? If there is a clash of interests between landless farm-labourers and absentee landlords, tea pluckers and the management, fishermen and the boat owning mudalalis, in short a clash of interests between the 10% in the highest income bracket who obtain 49% of the national income and the 40% in the lowest income group who receive only 7% of the national income, whose side will the professional take?

Now this is about the second marriage partner, the professionals and this makes the marriage still more difficult, because true NGOs will always side with the poor, the weak and the powerless and the priority need for development is for them.

There is also a third partner which flirts sometimes with one and then with another and always demands the biggest say in what happens. This is the government which has a preponderance of financial resources, coercive power and infrastructural support. In our system of representative democracy the people delegate their sovereign authority of self-determination to their elected representatives. But just as the people themselves in today's society are confused, diverse in their views and varied in their interests as members of different ethnic, religious, caste, economic and cultural groups and classes, so are their elected representatives. But within the government the interests of these groups conflict and the strength of the government is dissipated in reconciling them instead of providing a stable framework for marriage.

The Framework

Now, let us think of the Poruwa, the stage, which is national development. Is there a consensus on what is called national development? Can anybody tell me what national development is? What is the programme for national development? Are there any objectives agreed upon, targets set, resources identified, technologies defined in this very vague term called national development? Even if the two partners NGOs and professionals find a possibility of a

marriage contract they have no agreed common ground to stand on for the consummation of the marriage.

What about the laws governing the marriage? What is this so called participatory democracy? Where is this participatory democracy practised?

Let us be honest. In all these four areas I mentioned, underlying this beautiful theme, I see no common ground upon which consensus or harmony can be built. I am sorry, with regard to the terms like national priorities, human resources development, I have to say the same thing. They are all hackneyed terms which have been so much used and misused by the elites and professionals for nearly forty years to protect their self-interest against the masses. They have lost all relevance in the present day realities of our country. If they were right, our country probably would have never sunk to this dreadful and agonizing situation of today.

Does this mean that we cannot have any constructive and realistic relationship that can be built with all these elements to achieve a shared and sane objective at the level of the nation in the interest of all our people? I am not that pessimistic as to say "no". I think if the Government, the Professionals, NGOs, Ingos, Bingos, Engos and Gongos are all humble and sincere enough to understand that we all have committed very fundamental mistakes and have gone a long way in a wrong direction whose final destination is total disaster for all and if we are bold enough to take a complete round about turn then there is some hope and it is with that vision in mind I am making my remarks at this workshop.

Violation and Violence

Human beings and human groups can get together and work in harmony for mutual well-being to the extent that they recognise certain patterns or fundamental truths. Governments and all other organisations we refer to are basically run by and consist of human beings and human groups. Therefore, these truths or laws are basically

applicable to them also, as much as to the common masses. If individuals and groups violate these laws, to that extent the institutions to which they belong and which they control become inhuman and destructive. At this point human beings lose control of these institutions and the destructive processes that these institutions generate begin to control them. The human beings in turn become like machines and further enhance the mechanistic nature and processes of the structures. This vicious spiral of events becomes so uncontrollable that the society becomes violent, the environment gets polluted, the ecological balance gets de-stabilised and the whole society gets confused. I am not making an over-statement when I say that Sri Lankan society today is in this state. This vicious process was not released by rebellious and armed youths of the North or the South who are today on a self-destructive, violent rampage or by the silent suffering masses who were manipulated right along but by the short sighted controllers of the social, political and economic life of our people who dominated our country since independence.

This situation cannot be changed by holding on to our present beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, structures and practices. However much we attempt to make fresh alliances like what we are talking about, today at this workshop, without everyone of us undergoing a transformation in relation to others, each NGO undergoing a transformation vis-a-vis the other NGOs and the Government, the Government undergoing a transformation vis-a-vis the NGOs and the Professionals undergoing a transformation vis-a-vis the NGOs and the Government it will not be possible to achieve anything. Now the question is – Is this transformation possible at institutional or structural levels only without a prior transformation at the level of the individual and the human group? Personally, I do not believe that institutional or structural transformations can be achieved that easily, without the individuals and small groups like the family who form a part and parcel of these

institutions and structures themselves undergoing radical transformation. The ideal is to strive to bring about a simultaneous transformation.

This is why the organisation that I represent, namely, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has given priority to what we call 'Purna Paurushodaya' or the awakening of total human personality. The first objective of a Sarvodaya worker is not to transform others but to transform oneself and awaken one's own personality to the fullest. The means to bring about such transformation is one's participation in various welfare, development and social change programmes. To what extent the members of a professional organisation or an NGO are prepared to accept this objective is the first and foremost point of departure in what you may call human resources development.

Tapping the Fountainhead

If you define human resources development as training youths or people in employable ages in various vocations and skills needed to produce commodities and services in the country, we agree with you only partially. I do not believe that the greatest resource or the fountainhead of all constructive energies in a human being is either one's labour, feelings, intellectual capacities or various physical and mental skills. All these are useful and are of immense benefit to the development of a society but without tapping, as I said before, the fountainhead, the spirituality in man, there is no assurance that these skills and knowledge will be used wisely and constructively for the benefit of one-self and others.

The essence of spirituality for me, as far as its impact on the nature of a human being is concerned, is a vision of reality shared by the members of a community. This includes values, perceptions, thoughts and concepts on the basis of which the society organises itself to face problems and find solutions. In our pre-colonial society this vision was

provided by the Buddhist philosophy with its Four Noble Truths, Noble Eight Fold Path, Theory of Dependant Origination (or Paticca Samuppada Dhamma), Karmic Theory, Pancha Niyāma Dharma (Five-fold laws of the cosmic order) and so on. The custodians and communicators of this vision of reality were the Maha Sangha and lay scholars and it was generally shared by all from the rulers to the peasants. The level of perception of this reality by each individual would not have been the same intellectually but spiritually they were resonating with the same qualitative richness needed to share a common goal. Be it in matters of government, freedom and justice, irrigation and agriculture, arts and crafts, war and peace, education and literature, family relationships or any other human inter-relationship, it was from this vision that problems were analysed, solutions were sought, plans were made and implemented and the outcomes were shared.

The Present Reality

Today the Sangha and the indigenous scholars no longer occupy that generally respected place. They may occupy a prominent place in rituals but they are powerless in reality. They have been replaced by the professionals. First and foremost we have the professional politician who plays the most prominent role occupying the most powerful position over the life and death of our people. Under his or her direction professional soldiers, professional bureaucrats and technocrats, professional intelligence services, professional security services, professional writers and journalists, professional economists, technologists, engineers, technicians, medical men, managers and accountants and so on have control over the lives of all of us in this country. There is no doubt they possess great knowledge, expertise and skills but what is the vision of reality they have which they can generally share and communicate to the people who have been brought under their dependency by all kinds of manipulations?

Let us turn to the sub-culture that co-exists or supplements this dominant culture. They are professionals in their own forms of (Micca Ajiwa) wrong livelihood as opposed to Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiwa) making plenty of what is generally known as 'black money'. Unscrupulous contractors, commission agents, smugglers, narcotic dealers, brewers of intoxicants, promoters of gambling like casinos, illicit lumber merchants, liquor shop owners, tax-evaders and so on belong to this class. Professional contract-killers are the latest addition to this category.

Sometimes I do get the feeling that we have to start a kind of de-professionalization process for even mere survival as a human society.

I believe that if we are honest with ourselves we will find no difficulty in visualizing the total societal picture in which we are trying to become partners in national development in a participatory democracy. Who are the professionals who can make the biggest impact on the country? Are they not the ones with biggest patronage from the ruling and the moneyed class whose vision is acquisition and retention of power and wealth by any means? To them the end justifies the means. Power carries with it all the privileges of transcending the laws of nature, the common law, state laws and the Dharmic laws. It is this kind of narrow and selfish vision which can be called "possessive individualism" that has been increasingly promoted during the last four decades in this country. Its intensity took dangerous proportions during the last decade.

Is it surprising, therefore, that some youths both in the South and North have reacted violently to this state of affairs? I have always maintained that we are all caught in a chain of reactions generated by elitist professionalism and dominant cultures in our society. They all have untruth, violence and selfishness as the basis for their thoughts, words and deeds. They possess the fine instrument of communication science and technology. Their external manifestations are seen in the so-called terrorism and

counter - terrorism, blatant violations of human rights, inequalities in political and economic life, environmental pollution and ecological degradation and so on.

A New Vision of Reality

The emergence of such destructive social, political and economic superstructures and processes is the result of the erosion of spiritual, moral and cultural value infrastructures and processes in our country. Therefore, if we are to achieve anything positive and useful in the present context of our country we have to attack the problem at its very roots. We have to strive to radically transform both the infrastructure and the superstructure. We have to start not with those below the poverty line but with those who are above the rich line, who have acquired more than their just share - the affluent. They are the ones who control the media, the resources and all other systems that influence the society as a whole. They should be prepared to make sacrifices themselves and prove their readiness to accept a new vision, a more realistic life-style and the need for greater equality in society.

Poverty and affluence are two points in the same cycle of interrelated processes. A balance and harmony can be achieved only by perceiving both of these together and understanding their indivisible relationship. E.F. Schumacher's remarks about the American Economy is relevant here. He questioned the efficiency of the American Economy where 48% of the world's primary resources are used to support six percent of the world's population, without any observable improvement in the level of human happiness, well-being, peace or culture. We should ask the same sort of question about our own situation. I strongly believe that by non-violent means equity can be achieved if the professionals of the dominant culture undergo a fundamental transformation in their perception of reality. First and foremost they should promote the new vision of a no-poverty, no-affluence society. For building such a society we have enough resources and technologies at our disposal.

Participatory Democracy

A participatory political system is the most progressive and realistic way that can lead our society to that goal. The kind of politics we practise today is neither participatory nor democratic. What we have today is a most degenerate form of politics where acquisition of power by parties plays the most critical role. So it is a form of party and power politics we have. People, services, principles, national interests, values and even human lives have no place in this degenerate system of party and power politics. It is for this reason I said that I am most fascinated by this idea of participatory democracy you have included in the theme of this conference. We need radical change because however good an individual is this system corrupts him or her and alienates him or her from human values and human society.

It is not an easy task to transform the present political system to a participatory system. Still, however much difficult it is, it can be done if the principal means chosen is a new kind of 'development politics'. Political parties themselves have to undergo an internal transformation. They must learn to progressively divert their energies from competitive power-politics to co-operative developmental politics. Consensus has to be reached as to what in Sri Lankan context we mean by development, its objectives and targets, use of our natural resources and the role of the population both as participants and beneficiaries, the ways and means of devolving power to human groups and communities in rural and urban areas so that they would have authority over their community resources, production processes, planning, markets, technologies and so on. When such a series of development exercises are properly and intelligently generated their totality will grow into a pattern where democratic participation will become a reality.

A Non-Fragmented World View

You may think that I am unduly harsh and radical in what I have said so far. But please understand that behind these

words I harbour no illwill or mean any offence. All I am trying to say is the need for a new perception of reality on the part of all of us if we are to get out of the depressing situation we all are caught in. After working in a People's Movement for over 30 years, with as much dedication as one is capable of, I have now come to the conclusion that unless we educate ourselves to perceive the patterns working within our own bodies and minds as well as in everything else within the living and non-living world and their inter-relationships and inter-dependencies, I do not think that we can get out of this mire.

Let me illustrate what I mean. In a villiage in the Kalutara District three days before the last Sinhala/Tamil New Year, five deaths occurred, one after the other. A gang of assassins killed one individual who happened to be the secretary of a political leader. The same evening a defeated candidate of another political party was assassinated. The following day morning a retired school master was taken to his old school and was shot dead. Hearing this information a Buddhist monk of the temple got a heart attack and died. The same evening a trader's shop was set on fire and when the owner escaped to his house he was chased after. He left the house and ran into the jungle. There he fell into a pit and a spike pierced through his body. On the way to the hospital he died. All these five deaths occurred in one village within a matter of three days.Let us not think of who did it and why. On the other hand if we go deep into it we should be able to see a pattern at work.

What happened in this village is not an isolated case. It is happening everywhere and in increasing proportions. These patterns have engulfed the whole nation and even the whole world. So it is necessary to develop a global outlook when we plan even local actions. These patterns may have their own psychological components, emotional elements or thought streams. Similarly, there may be social, political and economic processes also as integral components of these patterns contributing to particular kinds of human conduct.

There may be environmental and ecological patterns or processes again working as patterns. Now instead of running round in circles to find a killer and a victim and re-acting to it releasing another chain of violent re-actions, we should be able to look at the totality of events as patterns taking place in our country and try to perceive what is really going wrong. Then only we can think of remedies.

Even the most advanced scientists of today no longer accept objective standards as the whole truth. They see ever changing patterns influencing one another as the only reality – kind of Paticcasamuppada Dharma. So it is not enough to look at our current crisis, breaking them into a political crisis, economic crisis, educational crisis, population crisis, environmental crisis, organisational crisis, energy crisis and so on. Instead we should strive to understand the larger crisis of our inadequate perception of total reality. All the problems we face in our society are different facets of one and the same crisis which is essentially a crisis of perception.

I think the first and the foremost task of those of us who are more informed than most others, particularly those who belong to leading professions, is to first undergo a transformation within themselves and then educate the whole society to bring about a shift in this perception of reality.

How did we do this in the past? I remember how we were taught by the teachers of the old so called 'vernacular school' that there were five dynamically related processes affecting man and his or her world. They called this 'Pancha Niyāma' – the five laws governing the cosmic order namely, Bija Niyāma (Biological Law), Utu Niyāma (Order of Seasons), Dhamma Niyāma (Order of Natural Phenomena), Kamma Niyāma (Order of Cause and Effect), and Citta Niyāma (Order of Mental Phenomena).

In the immediate aftermath of independence in 1948, our political leaders took our country along a path mapped out by the colonial powers and not along a path suited to our

indigenous sense of perception. An opportunity to reject the colonial pattern of thinking and direct our country along an indigenous path of development was offered to our leaders by the people in 1956. In a matter of three to four years, however, that opportunity was allowed to slip and our leaders were content with a pattern of political change based on a mere change of political parties. Even later, when in 1971 the youths gave frightening signals to the powers that be that change was needed and long overdue, our leaders did not take long to forget the significance of this ominous potent.

Janasaviya and Sarvodaya

It was in the 1950s that Sarvodaya began to think in terms of an alternative path to development, based on Janashakthi or Janasaviya or the power of the people themselves rather than relying on politicians alone to take the country towards its development goals. What we aimed to do was to revive the indigenous age-old perception of reality people still had and help communities to understand and be aware of their true conditions. Further, we aimed to assist people to organise themselves on the basis of their own leadership qualities and their own projects to their fulfilment. This enabled them to identify and satisfy their own basic, secondary and tertiary needs. We aimed at creating awareness among the people, awakening them to build a new society away from the stranglehold of party-politics and based on the people's own power and therefore, truly democratic, socialist and participatory. Undaunted by the many obstacles that lay in our path we forged ahead with our programmes and today we have built an identity of our own, without owing allegiance to any power group and therefore, capable of acting with utmost independence.

Sarvodaya is active in 8,000 village communities in all the 245 sub-districts in the country. The perception of development that is shared by all of us irrespective of linguistic, racial, religious and political differences prevailing

in society is that it is an awakening process that should take place in every human being, family, occupational group, village or urban community, the national community and the world community. This awakening should be unfragmented and total. It should be an integrated series of total processes including spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political and economic aspects. When development is understood and defined in this manner there is a common ground on which the illiterate and the literate, the educated and the less educated, the privileged and the under-privileged, the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled can all begin to have a fresh look within themselves and try to bring about a dynamic re-adjustment process towards a more sustainable, sane and equitable society without resorting to violence.

Therefore, we are able to carry on with our work uninterruptedly in all places in our country even though various armies, hartals, curfews and the frequent eruptions of violence do permit us less freedom of physical movement. Ours is a kind of participatory democracy in the making, through a development activity without getting entangled in power-oriented party politics. It is the building of a sustainable economy in microcosm, blazing a trail in the opposite direction to the prevailing open economy, where acquisitiveness, competition, selfishness and greed are enthroned. I mentioned the Sarvodaya experience to illustrate to you that even under most difficult conditions of crisis there are plenty of opportunities for constructive work and positive action.

Whilst we will not associate ourselves with the governmental, private sector and non-governmental programmes that go against this particular perception, we do not hesitate even for a moment to extend our fullest co-operation to all of them in those projects, programmes and processes which conform to this perception. Unfortunately, this kind of selective co-operation is sometimes misunderstood and is met with hostilities which we have to bear up with patient detachment.

I am not very familiar with the practical working of the Janasaviya Programme as designed by the Government. But I can express some thoughts on the concept of Janasaviya itself for your consideration, especially from the point of view of a possible contribution by professional associations, to its success. There are two diametrically opposite forces contending for superiority over the mass consciousness in the country today. One is western oriented, centralised, bureaucratised, energy intensive, capital dominant, foreign dependent and high technology oriented. In broad terms, this benefits only a few, wastes natural and human resources, pollutes the environment, destroys cultural values, degrades the spirituality in man, increases the debt burden, creates competition, illwill, factionalism, violence and chaos. The strength of the people or Janasaviya can never succeed if this is the paradigm of development in which Janasaviya is going to function. Janasaviya simply has no place in this system.

The other force is decentralised, spread over the masses of people, is closer to the individual, the family and occupational groups and nature, is less energy consuming, value based, recycles resources and resorts to human scale technologies and management systems. Janasaviya can manifest itself within this process of development, bringing benefits to the vast majority of poor and powerless people. This can be called a people-centered development process.

A People-Centred Development

In my opinion the Government, the professionals and the NGOs must all contribute to the latter paradigm of people-centred development, if the Janasaviya Programme is to be a success. Having accepted this principle, the Government can contribute in creating a climate of freedom and participation both for the professionals and the non-governmental organisations by various progressive legislation and changing certain prevailing administrative systems that go against Janasaviya spirit. Then only can a

community in a rural or urban area take control over their own environment and resources and develop the much needed community managerial skills and systems that can bring about an improvement in their material and spiritual welfare.

Instead of a top down system of ethical, economic and political commands being used to set things right in a macro manner, tens of thousands of groups and community-based integrated processes will emerge all over the country carving out a new direction for the whole society as a mass movement. A true Janasaviya will emerge enriching the consciousness of the people and re-building the critical mass of consciousness needed for sanity, peace and constructive behaviour. Once this critical choice is made then a whole portfolio of activities can be chosen in which the professionals with their expertise, NGOs with their mass organisational abilities and the government with all its legislative administrative and monetary resources can all be pooled together to meet the crises in youth and education, democracy and law, resource management and technology, economy and the livelihood of the masses and so on as an integrated solution to a total human problem.

The Role of Professionals

What should be the role of the professionals in giving concrete expression to the stated objectives of President R. Premadasa's bold and unorthodox approach to attack poverty in a direct way? Should it be to continue to follow the beaten track and look at this programme in the same way as another kind of production-centred development?

I wish to emphasise once again that Janasaviya will only be a success if the same criteria that were used for production-centred development are not used to formulate, implement and evaluate its programmes. Production centred development requires big capital, high technology, highly competent managers, extensive markets and so on. This form of development simply does not pay sufficient

attention to its impact on our cultural values which have oriented our thinking and motivational patterns for centuries, and so will have adverse impacts on our human psychology. The spirit and the objectives of Janasaviya are not therefore, conducive to production-centred development. Therefore, one of the foremost tasks of the professionals is to design and advise the government of an alternative form of people-centred development.

The President himself has said that people are the biggest resource upon which he depends to develop the country. So development itself should be centred around people. But here the professionals must face up to a hard truth. Most of the professionals, especially those of us present at this discussion today are geared to the existing system of production-centred development. As principal decision makers most belong to an elite urban based group with linkages to international monitoring systems, markets, technologies and management methodologies. On the other hand, it is the vast majority of rural-based people who are outside the production-centred development process who are going to be the principal decision-makers and implementors of people-centred methods of development envisaged by the Janasaviya programmes.

The high-minded task of the professionals is to define this new development systematically, formulate objectives, give empirical formulae, device monitoring and evaluating systems and last but not least develop strategies that will bring about a transformation of our highly dependent economy to a less dependent and more self-sufficient economy serving the needs of all people rather than the ever mounting wants of an affluent few. This last exercise seems to me the most important from the point of view of a non-violent transformation of our economy in an environment which is charged with violence.

The idea of participatory democracy is relevant here. Those intellectuals in the legal and administrative professions must give thought to this. They should be able

to present to the general public and as well as the political leaders and parties an alternative system of government where people have a greater say in political decision -making, and where rival political groups are not rewarded by the political system for appealing to the basest human instincts.

NGOs have in varying degrees formulated and implemented programmes which touch on all the above aspects I have referred to. But their strength and effectiveness will be multiplied should they come into a healthy working relationship with professional associations. The professionals have access to invaluable intellectual resources and competencies. A beginning can be made now in combining the resources of NGOs and professionals and producing a synergy that is more powerful than their energies taken alone.

Let us take an example of a Human Rights Organization. Since many NGOs work close to the people in rural areas, they will be more knowledgeable about human rights violations. Similarly, people will be more aware of the facilities offered by the NGOs. There are many public-spirited lawyers who would earnestly desire to offer their services on behalf of genuine victims of injustice, but they do not have the opportunity to locate them. Often the NGOs in turn, would have no access to courts of law and also they would seldom have any means to fight cases in the courts. There may also be situations where the laws themselves are unjust and discriminatory. Together, however, the NGOs and professional organizations can participate in an activity which would bring relief to affected people on the one hand under the existing law, while engaging themselves in advocacy programmes with legislators to change the unjust laws.

Similarly, the devolution of political and economic power to the level of the people entails a great deal of preparation of competent leaders among the people. When a community is given control over the natural resources within an area

around their community in a people-centred development process, they would need to acquire a host of skills in appropriate management, technologies, markets, costing, accounting and organizational methods. All these have to be thoughtfully designed, so that the benefits go to the people and not to the already rich and powerful elite classes.

It must also be recognised that any geniune devolution of power and decentralisation of activities requires that the power and decision-making authority that is vested at the top must be reduced. But to what extent does the constitutional framework harmonise with this imperative? Another important point to note is that the debate over the devolution of power has been limited to the provincial and district levels. But these are very large units in themselves and limiting the devolution of power to those levels will neither do very much to resolve our so-called ethnic problem nor foster the spirit of people-centred development. We need to think much more seriously about the legal and administrative mechanisms by which power is devolved directly to the village level itself. Such thinking will, of course, be facilitated if professionals in the legal, financial and managerial spheres work out the appropriate institutional mechanisms that could organise and empower village communities in their own interests.

For instance, most if not all of the textbooks on finance and management focus on top-down and macro-level issues in a sophisticated commercial environment. But what we need today is more of a micro-level focus that can be utilised by village societies to manage and operate small-scale projects, obtain the necessary financing, inputs, and marketing capacities. The technology used in the production process will necessarily have to be simple, sustainable and replicable. But I am afraid, it is likely that the professional engineers here today are more familiar with large macro engineering than with sustainable engineering that does not leave us dependent on foreign markets that constantly work to our disadvantage.

What we need above all is a holistic or total vision of the human being, society and the world. With respect to the human being I can think of no better area to explain what I mean than that of medicine. Human beings are not only matter or body, they are mind or spirit as well. But the Western approach to medicine that we have copied tends to compartmentalise the human being into the body as a discrete unit and mind as another. Sometimes, the body itself is compartmentalised into the brain, heart, skin, arms and so on. The doctor, in turn, treats one or two of these artificially fragmented units. But today in the West, as was true of our indigenous medicine, the psychosomatic causes of disease are being increasingly looked into. The cure of the diseased body, the wounded psyche and the violent personality all need to be seen as part of an unfragmented human being. This is the new mission I urge for our doctors.

In the same light when extended to society as a whole limiting any programme of development to its material or economic dimensions alone is bound to fail in the long run because it violates the principle of self-organisation and the integrity of the human personality which is a composite of psychological, moral, spiritual, social, cultural, economic and political factors. Professional economists who construct mathematical models of the economy and then base their policy prescriptions upon those models must be sensitive and aware of the complex, many-faceted and integrated nature of reality to which they apply their learning and skills.

In terms of our relationship to the world, we need to recognise that we live in an increasingly inter-dependent world from which we cannot isolate ourselves. On the other hand, we need to be realistic about our place in the present international order where the law of the jungle, whether in geopolitics, economics or the transmission of culture, tends to squeeze out the concept of the brotherhood and sisterhood of the human community.

A New Beginning

I began by describing what we are trying to do today to be akin to a marriage ceremony. I hope you will see now that the re-definition of development, radical transformation in the administrative system of the government and a new outlook and a sacrificial attitude on the part of the professionals will be necessary for the kind of marriage that we are talking about.

It is for this reason, I emphasise the importance of laying a foundation with a process of spiritual reawakening within all of us as human beings, families, groups and communities. Without such a psychological environment, it is difficult to face the present challenges. In the same way that modern nuclear physicists have rejected the theories of objectivity, substantiality and absolutism, we have to reject most of our present beliefs. After all we who inherited a culture which rejected these theories 2500 years ago and believed in ever changing patterns of mind and matter as the only reality should have no difficulty in reverting to the all-embracing realities which have been accepted by modern wisdom too.

Everything I think, say and do affects all others. It is the same with every single human being. If the collective consciousness of all of us could be rebuilt to reach a critical mass, then I believe the much needed process to create a society that shares and cares and where truth and non-violence reign could be achieved before the dawn of the new century.

Perhaps I may have raised more questions than I have answered. That is what I really intended to do because unless we question the very fundamental assumptions on which we are trying to solve problems, I do believe that we will get nowhere. In the first place all of us together have to look for a new world-view and share it with all our people. Then based on a mass consciousness that can be created by such an awareness-building exercise, we must in the second instance go on to a kind of social infrastructure building.

The various societal groups such as the pre-school children, school-going children, youths, women, farmers, craftsmen, different kinds of other production workers and of course the professionals getting organised and geared to achieving a collective objective which also fulfills the individual objective is what I mean by building a social infrastructure. The inputs such as information, knowledge, training and what you call human resources development have all to come in after the first two stages. Co-operation at this third stage is difficult without consciousness about the first two stages. In other words, an appropriate mass consciousness and social infrastructure are the prerequisites to bring about a national re-awakening where sustainable development processes, participatory political institutions and constructive social access can take place to realise the lofty ideal of a non-violent, equitable, just and caring society.

(Keynote Address delivered by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, OPA-NGOs workshop held on 13th and 14th of May 1989 at OPA Professional Centre - Colombo)

The Need for a Holistic Vision
in the Global Struggle for
Justice and Peace through Development

In the Asian order of things maturity by age is given a preferential place. I believe the influence of this Asian precept on NOVIB, which has been associated with Asians for nearly three decades, explains why you have invited me to deliver the opening address. I am very proud and rejoice at this opportunity of giving the opening address at this most important meeting between NOVIB and its principal development partners in Asia.

I first came in contact with NOVIB around 1965 when its first Secretary-General visited Sri Lanka. From 1966 onwards, NOVIB supported the Government of Sri Lanka through what was called at that time the Land Development Department. In 1969 when I visited the Hague and came to know about counterpart funding for NGO development projects I submitted an application on behalf of Sarvodaya to seek support for our Rural Youth Training Institute at Tanamalwila. After nearly two years of negotiations and going through various formalities we received the approval for the first grant on 10th December, 1971, and received the first tranche of Dfl 200,000/- on 5th July, 1972. From that time our relationship has developed progressively.

The Shifting Ground

When I look back I can visualise how Sarvodaya and NOVIB went through changing relationships beginning with a paternalistic donor – recipient relationship through a critical brotherhood relationship (as the former Secretary-General Dr Sjef Theunis once put it) and into the present mature relationship where we look at each other as equal partners in a global struggle for justice and peace through development.

I am sure, my other Asian colleagues from BRAC, AWARE and others would also have gone through the

same phases in their relationships with NOVIB. I have no doubt that the present meeting, which has brought all of us together for the first time at this level, will explore deeper into this relationship. We need to clarify further our collective vision and also consolidate our overall relationships as a prerequisite for deciding upon future policies and programmes, which we will be launching with broader objectives such as influencing the region as a whole in the approaches to development. It is with this perception I am making my remarks.

I read very carefully all the documentation papers prepared for this occasion by various experts commissioned by NOVIB. I was taken aback a little and read with trepidation Dr Peter H. Streefland's remarks when he speaks about the Sri Lankan partners in these words, "Among its (NOVIB's) partners there is one giant, which NOVIB supports through a Consortium, while the remainder are about 20 relatively small organisations." Being an optimist and a person always looking at the bright side of things I take this reference to Sarvodaya as a giant, as a great compliment. We have a saying in our rural areas that a giant among animals, the elephant, is only afraid of the chameleon. Sarvodaya is often referred to by the villagers as a chameleon which is a very small animal who is able to keep the elephant at bay. The giants they refer to are the various institutions, both governmental and private sector, which are relatively rich in coercive power and which may take the form of repressive legislation, giant bureaucracies, high technologies, all-pervasive control over markets, dominance over commercial media and last but not the least the use of violent force. Sarvodaya is referred to as a chameleon because if the elephant becomes too repressive and a nuisance the chameleon can create trouble by entering the elephant's trunk (nose) unnoticed by it.

So, really we are not only a giant, I am sure BRAC, AWARE and other so-called BINGOS also would agree with me; we are also a breed of chameleons who are

fighting for freedom, equity, justice and survival in our own ways. Prof. Dennis Goulet, the well-known development philosopher and writer, refers to the theoretical concept on which organisations like Sarvodaya work, as the termite theory. Of course the difference is unlike the termites we spare what is good and should be preserved, while we build up the anthill. The best comparison I think is with the bees and bee-hives.

The perception with which we look at an organisation or a problem is most important. Here, one looks at it as a giant while the others look at it as chameleons, termites or bees. In fact at times we have to work at the level of micro-processes and at other times we have to work at that of macro-processes, depending on so many other factors, if we are to achieve the objectives which we have set before us.

NOVIB, in its mandate is very clear as to the objectives it seeks to achieve. It is "..... to advance the world society in which social economic contrasts between rich and poor are removed, knowledge, wealth of the world is distributed fairly and in which people and population groups can get acquainted with each other's cultures, learn to respect them and will co-operate on the basis of a shared responsibility, a mutual solidarity in order to improve their development." In this objective is contained a global vision of social and economic justice, cross cultural fertilisation for mutual cultural enrichment, mutual respect, sharing, co-operation and solidarity. In fact, all of us who are gathered here from the Asian region share this vision, even though the terminology we use may be different due to our own thinking patterns. But the spirit is the same.

NOVIB has translated this vision into action in three different but integrated sectors, namely, in supporting projects in the third world, education in the Netherlands and political pressure to bring about changes in policies. In the preparatory studies submitted by Dr Streefland, Dr Floris Blankenberg, Drs. Max Glaser and by De Beuk Consultants a vivid description of the activities under these

sectors has been provided. This is very helpful to us. I would like to congratulate them for their efforts for a job well done.

I should also make special mention of the excellent paper, 'Big and Still Beautiful' – An Enquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of three big NGOs (BINGOS) in South-Asia, prepared by Messrs Nico Beets, Jan Neggars and Fritz Wils. The authors have successfully penetrated into the changing patterns of AWARE, BRAC and Sarvodaya in the contexts of their vision, mission, successes, failures and future aspirations. We are grateful to them for their insights which we have no doubt will benefit us in our work.

I have known NOVIB for about 25 years. To me, what is important is not only the acquisition of knowledge through empirical data but also the wisdom one gets through intuition by a long series of associations with persons, events, shifting physical and psychological environments and of course the other evolving processes. What happened in Blankenburg Straat office of NOVIB with a much smaller staff and what is happening today in the Ameliostraat with a much bigger staff in Holland and its inter-relationships and inter-dependencies with partners, also on similar shifting grounds, across seas in India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines and so on, has a direct bearing as far as their changing patterns affecting each other are concerned.

We can even go beyond our organisations to the global scene of politics, conflicts and developmental scenarios and we will be able to see things not only empirically but also perceive things and events intuitively as they shifted their patterns.

I do think that the present time is a most opportune one to supplement and integrate our past thinking on various issues with a new vision of global reality. The micro-processes we have released in tens and thousands of places through non-governmental organisations and voluntary

efforts, certainly have brought a global pattern, which has got into a dynamic interaction with other macro-patterns released by much more worldly and powerful organisations like governments and international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. Perhaps, on top of these we have to perceive other global processes which have a direct impact on the human and animal species, the plant kingdom and the physical infrastructures that sustain them. Now it is time for us to explore and develop a total world view within which we have to function more effectively to realise our objectives.

Measuring Quality

NOVIB has been instrumental in finding for us the NGDO partners, for increasing amounts of monetary resources, providing technical know-how and other material assistance over the years. But compared to the quantity of the same kind of resources that have been made available to the governments and private sectors by other bilateral and multilateral donors, NOVIB's contribution to the voluntary sector is only a drop in the ocean.

Thus, the so-called giant, Sarvodaya, obtains around Rs. 200 million in all-inclusive assistance this year which includes NOVIB contribution of Rs. 80 million. Since Sarvodaya works in 8,000 villages in which a population of about 3 million people live, this works out to a per capita assistance of Rs. 67 or US $2 per year.

However, the impact of this drop with whatever shortcomings in implementation of projects and programming has been monitored, evaluated and debated over and over again during the past one and a half decades at least. Such critical evaluations have educated us and toughened us to the realities of aid. The unfortunate fact is the formal aid programmes which have created the terrible debt burden for the third world, besides other hazards have not been evaluated with that much of strict rigidity. Have these forms of macro-aid enriched us, improved our capacity

for self-development, narrowed the poverty gap and improved our quality of life or have they impoverished us more as a people, destroyed our cultural values, destabilised ecological balance, polluted our environment, made us more dependent, created more pockets of poverty, promoted societal violence, created more dependencies and even enriched the already affluent in the third world and the first world? Now I believe you will see why we are taking a total approach to development rather than a fragmented approach. Also see that to subject our development programmes, which seek a people-centred and holistic development, to one dimensional economic cost-benefit analyses and to find them wanting, wasteful or inefficient is to miss the point about what we are doing.

Most of the subjects coming under the NOVIB projects aid package such as rural development, education, health care, urban issues, women's development, fishing and technology development, credit and agricultural development and so on have also been supported in much greater quantities by the multilateral and bilateral grants and loans to the governments and the private sector. Did all these make a difference in the conditions in the third world? NGDOs also received an enhanced packet of project aid as years passed by. Efficiency in our project formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and management have certainly increased with increases in our budgets. Along with these the overhead costs also have proportionately increased.

The question I am asking is, have they really made a quantitative or qualitative difference in our countries? Or have they made our conditions worse? Are we not also following the same objectives and methodologies in microcosm in our efforts? I am posing this problem to you because intuitively I feel we can make a big quantitative as well as qualitative difference to our work with each drop in the ocean if perhaps we pioneer a radically different approach to development and our role in it from a much

more realistic world view.

What do I mean by this? I can best explain this to you from the vision with which we in Sarvodaya have been working right along. Sometimes I felt very sad and at other times I smile when I observe some of our evaluators cracking their heads trying every possible technique they have learned to quantify and measure our work from an objective standard. I think the most modern quantum physicists themselves have rejected 'the objectivity standard' in their scientific investigations. They no longer believe that the investigator can stand apart from the object that is being investigated. There is no static object and there is no static investigating subject. Both the subject and the object are undergoing dynamic changes all the time. In one second they say over a trillion thoughts pass through a normal human mind. So what is real is only the phenomena of constantly changing patterns of mind and matter. Therefore, what can be really measured is not quantitative change but qualitative change. Quantity is not directional. Quality is directional. Quality is determined by the vision that directs the body-mind patterns to reach a certain goal pattern. If happiness for all is the objective then the qualitative approaches made to realise that objective can be measured. The standards of measurement can be formulated.

Once Dr E. F. Schumacher, the author of 'Small is Beautiful' asked – "Can you call the American economy efficient? In spite of the fact that 6% of the world's population use 48% of the world's primary resources can one say the American economy is efficient and the Americans are happier than others?" Can one say that an affluent person will necessarily be a happier person? Please do not think that I am romanticising poverty. As much as poverty degrades and dehumanises an individual so is affluence. These are two extremes that we have to reject. Therefore, we have to reject both poverty and affluence. We have to create a world without poverty and without affluence.

The Sarvodaya Vision

The Ideal of the Sarvodaya Movement is a No Poverty – No Affluence Society. It is here that the qualitative approach comes in. This sort of ideal cannot be achieved without an all-embracing vision of reality. We may have different perceptions of reality; but the important thing is to have some kind of perception of reality. In the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, therefore, we accepted the traditional vision of the cosmic order as taught by our ancients. They taught us that there is a five-fold cosmic order or natural law (Pancha Niyāma) that affect human beings, human societies and the planet as a whole. The five laws are – Order of the Seasons (Uthu Niyāma), the Order of Plant Life or the biological order (Bīja Niyāma), the Order of Natural Phenomena (Dhamma Niyāma), the Order of Mental Phenomena (Chitta Niyāma), and the Moral Order or the Order of Cause and Effect in one's conduct, in thought, word and deed (Kamma Niyāma).

Within individuals, families, groups of people at all levels from the village community to the world community, there are patterns of energies created by the interaction of these cosmic laws. Some are caused by man and other living beings and others are caused by other forms of nature. The human being, the most advanced of the living world, has to develop his perception to see these patterns, obey them for sustained dynamic stability and maximisation of harmony and happiness.

In other words, we can look at the gap between the rich and the poor, prevalence of hunger, disease and ignorance, bloody internal and international conflicts and wars, amassment of conventional and nuclear armaments, organised and institutionalised forms of social, political and economic exploitation as being conditions brought about by imbalances and violations of these five-fold laws.

This is the reason why we define development as an awakening process that takes place in the spiritual, material,

cultural, social, economic and political life of the human being, family, rural and urban communities, national community and the world community. It is from this standpoint that the variety of awakening processes were realised under various generally used terms like welfare and development projects and programmes; but all of them fall into an integrated and interdependent system of patterns which bring about a qualitative impact on man, society and nature.

Sarvodaya is called a Movement when we look at it philosophically and totally at its manifestations. It is called an organisation when we look at its membership formations, five stages of rural transformation, variety of organised activities in every relevant field such as agriculture, small industries, environment, women, slums, freedom from violence and natural disasters, children, youth, the malnutritioned, the disabled, and so on. There is accountability and all the paraphernalia incorporated with modern organisations. The challenge Sarvodaya faces is to maintain its philosophical and spiritual identity for the sake of qualitative change while achieving quantifiable targets to conform to the objectives of the partners in the North. For example, while NOVIB developed its three major sectors of project work, education and political pressure to realize their objectives we developed our awareness creation, integrated development and total structural change programmes to realize our objectives. As many as sixty such programmes were developed under those three broad headings.

As much as NOVIB has to bring about a process of decentralisation for its own efficiency and accountability we too had to bring about a kind of decentralisation. Of course we do not call it by that word. We had to generate three processes to retain on the one hand the giant's strength to survive and face the challenges of macro-forces while on the other hand the bee's heedfulness and the chameleon's flexibility to maintain our humaneness. So while the

organisation expanded to its present size we followed a three-fold approach to retain our qualitative as well as quantitative importance.

After a village or urban community reaches a particular level of consciousness and organisation, then they are converted into autonomous local societies under the laws of the land. Out of the 8,000 villages where we are restricted to work by our consortium partners already over 1/3 of them have become independent legal entities. Organically each society is a complete community by itself. Yet they can become progressively bigger communities when societies in a cluster of villages develops solidarity based on common interests. This kind of distribution of power earlier held by the central organisation to the base may be called a decentralisation process.

When any one of these communities innovates new activities that help to bring about a quantitative and qualitative improvement in their living standards and if they are worthy of replicability then new programmes are evolved that have a horizontal dispersion. This is called evolution, a new kind of empowering process evolved from the bottom up and sideways.

The third process is where the power at the national level is totally devolved in various newly created, specialised and autonomous organisations. Sarvodaya Suwa Setha Sewa Society Limited, which is looking after most of the social welfare activities of the Movement, Sarvodaya Women's Organisation, Sarvodaya National Institute for Child Development, Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services, Sarvodaya Management Institute, Sarvodaya Research Institute, Sarvodaya Relief and Rehabilitation Services, Sarvodaya People's Peace Organisation, Sarvodaya Legal Aid Services, Sarvodaya Rural Technical Services, and Sarvodaya Shanthisena or Peace Corps are some of the examples of creating new bodies to take over responsibilities of a particular development and organised sector from the main

organisation. This is called a devolutionary process.

Therefore, the organisation is functioning through these processes of decentralisation, evolution and devolution of power striving to bring about a dynamic harmony in a total approach towards people-centred development in a participatory democracy. In this same manner I am sure the other partner organisations like BRAC and AWARE are responding to various new challenges from their own perceptions of reality and as they implement their programmes with varying successes and failures. How can our beloved partner NOVIB respond to this kind of innovative changes that are taking place in our Movements and Organisations?

Genuine Involvement

As much as the NGOs in the South are operating in their environments motivated and guided by their intuitive wisdom and empirical findings, I believe partners in the North, including NOVIB, are also operating in their own environments motivated and guided by their perceptions of wisdom and knowledge.

The critical question is how can we, in the North and the South together, perceive the global situation as a whole and work towards a complementary goal while supplementing each other's efforts? We in the South do not have either the technological wherewithal or the access to data pertaining to the transfer of resources from the poor world to the rich world even though the fact that there is such a transfer of resources from the rich to the poor is well-publicised.

As much as you make this information and the lessons to be learnt from it available to your own sponsors, I believe they should be made available to us also. This kind of information will be of great benefit to us in enhancing our self-reliance and empowering our consciousness as NGOs and Third World Governments. I am sure this will bring about the realisation that unless we reject the material, value-oriented, wasteful and affluent lifestyles promoted by

the Western paradigm of development we can never realise the lofty ideals of health for all, shelter for all, total disarmament and peace and other such well-publicised targets by the year 2000.

When there are inflationary tendencies, signs of a recession or depression or a fuel crisis, the Big Seven and all of the others in the so-called First and Second Worlds know how to manage the crises in their own interests. The small group of Seventy Seven and others in the so-called Third and Fourth Worlds do not have the same manipulative capacities in any sector. Of course responding to the perspectives of the World Bank the International Monetary Fund advocates the new formula of Structural Adjustment Policies to Third World countries. So these real giants control the highly centralised global money market, the gold and diamond trade, prices of all mineral and vegetable products, transportation, insurance and other unseen economies, the armament industry and the communication networks. Therefore, at least during our lifetimes and those of our children this control will be in your hands, and not in ours.

In the 1950s and 1960s there was perhaps a better atmosphere of international cooperation for development than there is today. Not only were the industrialised countries able to expand their own economies very fast, they were alive to the large number of new countries that were gaining independence and acquiring a voice in international fora. But in the last ten years, especially, this environment has deteriorated considerably because of the recession and slow growth taking place in the industrial economies, leading to protectionism, the virtual collapse in commodity prices and a drying up of resource flows. In 1979 there was a positive balance of $40 billion in the flow from the rich countries to the poor ones. By contrast, today, there is a reverse flow of $60 billion which means that the poor countries are helping to sustain the rich ones and not vice versa.

Looking at it from this perspective, is it enough of an explanation for you to say "But of course, we are not a political party." I remember the times when members of Commissions of Dialogue from NOVIB told us firmly "You must take a political stand." You may remember I too told you "We are not a political party either." But how long can we go on like this with arguments and countervailing arguments and exonerating ourselves from being a party to this tragedy of global inequity, violence and suffering? Will you not be more genuinely involved in our struggles and show us a way to share in yours?

My plea is let us not fool ourselves. We are not party or power politicians, but we are organisations and people who are highly political, though in a participatory and non-sectarian sense.

From numerous international fora I have time and again said that among all the international NGOs in the world, the most progressive and egalitarian one I have dealt with is NOVIB. I did not say this because NOVIB was our main development partner. There was a time in deference to NOVIB thinking we in Sarvodaya refused some sizeable aid packets we were offered by some international donor organisations. I said this because I believed in the kind of approach that NOVIB developed under the stewardship of Dr. Sjef Theunis. I also believe that now under the leadership of Dr. Max Vandenburg, a new dimension, as an organic expansion of the previous one, will emerge in our future relationship with each other and with global realities.

The Golden Path

Please permit me to offer a few examples. Let us take the vexed question of so-called ethnic minorities. Our general tendency is to believe that the majority oppresses the minority and that therefore the minority has to be strengthened to defend itself. But this is not the whole truth: it is but a partial truth. Of course, it is to the advantage of neo-imperialists and ruling classes to promote

this destructive approach. But when you look at the whole truth and look at the population as a whole, as we used to in the pre-colonial times, then the picture that is perceived becomes different.

Perhaps then we shall see that the minority of people with unjustly earned wealth and power is trying to maintain the status quo over the majority of poor and powerless people by highlighting the ethnic difference whenever it becomes necessary for them to undermine change that empowers the poor majority.

This situation is no different at the global level when we think of the so-called North-South disparities and other such issues. Suddenly we get instructions from you that there is a financial crisis in the North and that therefore we should cut down on our programmes. Right through our relationship we have been doing this. But just as you have the power to transfer your crises to us, we also have to find ways and means to either shift those crises onto the communities and groups of people with whom we work or evolve alternative methods of development management. Is it not much better that we devise new ways and means together where the crises are tackled at all levels in a more organic and sustainable way where the sacrifice is shared by all?

Now we have developed together the consortium approach. In the case of Sarvodaya the minimum budget we prepared for the consortium was more or less halved when the final commitment was made. The ever-increasing inflation which affects the costs of transport, materials and every other requirement, and the cost increases that have resulted owing to the delays caused by the violent environment has reduced the amount of real resources available by a further 25%.

I do not know whether this vicious cycle will be checked. So while the consortium idea is a good one, it by-passes the real issue, which is your partnership and support to enable us to continue our development work in a qualitative direction and reverse the process of dependency.

The budgetary mechanisms have brought in their wake restrictions and limitations which have to a greater or lesser degree reduced our capacity for flexibility, expansion and effectiveness when perhaps it is most needed. We aim at a total transformation of society by non-violent means – Can this aim be achieved by a limited programme of work in a limited number of villages in the country? Can a rigidly pre-arranged programme of work cope with the ever-changing patterns of violence and social conflict? In what way could we free part of resources to meet these challenges even experimentally? These are some of the questions we ask ourselves as we near the half way mark of our current consortium budget.

NGO participation in development with greater involvement of the poorest of the poor in their self-development projects and programmes is today a fashionable and accepted policy on the part of governments, inter-governmental agencies and expatriate NGOs or ENGOs. Most of us sometimes get into a relaxed mood thinking that at last we have found the golden path. But I believe only if we eat into the existing structure like termites, enter the trunk of the elephants like chameleons and build a million honeycombs like the bees will we be treading the golden path.

This seminar is most timely and we look forward to a week of constructive work. I take this opportunity to thank NOVIB, the Dutch public and the government for all the friendship and solidarity extended to us, and look forward to greater joint exploration to the future to "tear up the roots of poverty and powerlessness."

Dr. Sjef Theunis is younger than I, and he has not reached the retirement age, but after a great job done he has entered a new field. I have passed the formal age of retirement. I have left the organisational field in Sarvodaya a year and a half ago. Now I am like a person on extended service, wiser but not retired, more revolutionary but

spiritual, and seeking to see the whole in the part and not the part alone.

I am sure that as time passes all of you including my dear Abed and our dear respected Sri Mahadevan, Dr. Max Vandenburg, Ing. Hans Pelgrom and the most ideal development thinker, practitioner and pragmatist who helped Sarvodaya in the past few years, our esteemed friend Peter de Haan, also will have to tear yourselves away from the centre to a higher level of the periphery. We have to climb to the top of the hill and see the other side, and think at last "Oh God or Oh Gods! there have been other paths too that could have brought us to the top of the hill."

(The opening Address delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President, Sarvodaya, at the NOVIB Asia Seminar held in the Netherlands on 16th May, 1989)

Political Institutions and Traditional Morality

The Buddhist Influence

Sri Lanka is a country where we possess a tradition that goes back more than 2,500 years. This tradition had been a dynamic one, growing, changing, assimilating, adapting itself during the past. But the spirit of it remained Sri Lankan in the sense that the original inspiration received from the Buddhistic teachings at the beginning of the period remains almost intact in spite of multifarious misfortunes and vicissitudes the nation suffered during the course of its history.

The main features of traditional morality need a brief description in the present context. There is no doubt that at the time when Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka, in the 3rd century B.C., the country did possess a socio-cultural system in which a way of life sustained by some form of traditional morality was available. What its forms and contents were are not clear to us at this time mainly because there are no sources available which give information on the precise nature of the system of morality that existed during that time. The introduction of Buddhism contributed to a specific change in the society of the day and whatever features that society had at the time were synthesised into the making of the society that emerged with the introduction of Buddhism. With that the traditional morality of the existing society – the pre-historic society was in a very benign way, superseded or engulfed by Buddhism.

There is historical evidence that the Sri Lankan society fashioned its socio-cultural fabric on Buddhist lines as early as the 3rd century B.C. From then onwards traditional morality, at least in its main features were based on Buddhist values of life. This Buddhist ideal, of course, had to be modified, altered, softened or socio-culturally adjusted to meet day to day practical demands and problems.

One could observe how kingship originated in the Sri Lankan society in the past. The concept of Gamani or the leader of the village gradually gave rise to an individual exercising his power over others. The story of how this concept arose adjusting itself to the ideological changes from the Indian mainland and the practical, political and social problems that arose are a fascinating study.

Kingship once established gave birth to a set of political institutions. Morality strongly influenced by Buddhist Teachings made it possible for these institutions to carry on their day to day activities smoothly. The basic morality in the Buddhist teachings was the Panca Sīla or the Five Precepts. They are, refraining from taking the life of living beings, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from unacceptable forms of sexual intercourse, refraining from uttering falsehood and finally refraining from taking intoxicants that cause heedlessness.

The remnants or residue of this traditional morality are still seen as for example when in almost every one of our social functions we ritually observe the Five Precepts. But very few realise how important it had been to us in the past to give these institutions meaning and form in our livês. Morality was the oil which got the political institutional machinery working both at the micro level and at macro level.

Let us take a look at a village where the institution known as the Gamsabhawa comprising the leaders of the village was the micro political (and also the social) institution that conducted village affairs. Here traditional morality had to say: you are bound not to tell lies, and consequently the expectation that nothing but truth emerged in all its dealings. Individually this morality demands one to be true to oneself on the one hand and on the other hand the community treasured this morality as it was a much needed value to them. Further as a community they had the power to question and verify either the decision of the village leaders or the way such decisions were arrived at and finally

implemented.

At the macro level the king was considered a Bodhisatva or Nascent Buddha. Sociologically, this is a very important concept having its roots in traditional morality. The king would one day become a Buddha. The usual form of address to a king was "Oh you God! Who would one day become a Buddha" (Deyiyo Buduvanda). The king was thus the individual at the highest level who would maintain the system of traditional Morality. His status was preserved by the very system of morality he practised.

One sees an analogy here between the Sri Lankan king and the Indian Cakravarti. The Cakravarti lives in the Norm (Dharma) and upheld it. He is a Cakravarti or a Universal Monarch because he upholds the Norm and lives according to it. In the case of the Sri Lankan king it is the traditional morality he maintains and after which he fashions his life. The analogy is very relevant and interesting. The norm in Sri Lankan politics is this traditional morality.

Such a king at the macro level did usually possess four important characteristics. One could discern in these characteristics the extent to which the system of traditional morality pervaded the institution of Kingship. The characteristics are: sharing, pleasant speech, fruitful activities and equality. Sharing is observed in the alms given to others as well as how the king does not enjoy any material need by himself. In using pleasant speech, the king does not harm others. He refrains from killing or hurting even an animal. The king's activities are for the well-being of the people. These activities have to be designed in a way conducive to yield economic and social progress. Finally, traditional morality made it incumbent upon the king to consider himself as equal to any one of his countrymen but not above them.

This sense of equality found in Sri Lanka's system of traditional morality is not precisely understood by most of us. Buddhist moral thinking makes us feel that we are all

alike. Although in practical life we may occupy different social positions and may belong to various economic stratas, all of us are human beings. Practically this is put into effect when religious rituals are chanted. Then all of us sit together in a circle on mats or on the floor. The king is no different from the common man. This sense of equality is again and again emphasised when we die. This is a social occasion that reminds us ritually how all of us are equal in this world.

The king did possess ten other traditional qualities. They are all based on the Five Precepts mentioned above. Let us look at these characteristics and examine how they contribute to the individual and group behaviour from the point of view of traditional morality. Of the characteristics, sharing, virtue, sacrifice, straight-forwardness, soft-heartedness, are easily understandable. They all explain the pattern of external action, i.e. how an individual behaves outwardly. The second set of characteristics deal more with inward feelings: ascetic practice, non-hurt, non-violence, kind-heartedness and feelings of non-opposition (avirodhita) or non-revengefulness.

Herein one observes how the principles of traditional morality flow in two directions: (1) towards influencing the external actions of an individual (2) towards influencing the springs of such action by going deep into the feelings of the individual. Traditional morality thus possesses a two-fold basis, in outward action and inward feeling that serve as the spring of such action.

The dominant strain of thinking in society was that viable political institutions needed strong individuals in whom the traditional moral basis was established. If the individual is morally weak the institution to which he or she belongs inevitably suffer. Institutions come into being with individuals working together and in traditional society for such a combination of individuals to work together successfully, traditional morality was a necessary condition.

In such political institutions as the group of wise people who advised the King in the past, Sri Lankan society had an institution in which traditional morals were firmly established. This advisory body often controlled the king's actions. One may even discern in certain Jataka Tales the prototypes of such institutions. The Ummagga Jataka relates how a group of pundits advised and guided the king. In all his important political and social actions the guidance of this body was sought by the king. He did not feel it bad to revoke his actions, if the advisory body thought that what he had done was morally wrong or socially damaging.

It is in this spirit that one could conceive of the Buddhist monk in the village. The monk's role is a varied one not confined only to spiritual matters. In a sense at the village level he is the moral as well as the spiritual adviser to the people. The micro political institution could not by-pass the Buddhist monk. His spiritual position was such that all local leaders and local political institutions had to listen to him.

How was the influence of the Buddhist Monk as a moral guide felt at the macro level in the country's political institutions? Here one has to conceive how the Buddhist monks were organised as a community and the community's relationship with the political forces and institutions. The community of monks was very powerful in traditional Sri Lanka.

The ordinary people paid great respect to the community of monks. Because of this respect, the role of the monk was a wide ranging one in society. He was not only a person necessary only on occasions of spiritual need. His role was also inter-woven with people's agricultural life, life-cycle rituals, irrigation activities, educational, health, economic, cultural and religious work. These complex roles made the individual monk and the community of monks, a considerable social and political force in society. The people listened to them and it was possible to mould public opinion through the monks. The monks in turn were the repository of traditional morality and this role they exercised as

individuals and as a community both at the village or local level and at the macro level.

The Colonial Impact

With the advent of the colonial powers beginning with the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and finally the British the basis of traditional morality was gradually eroded. This happened when an extremely different system of values was imparted to Sri Lanka by them. These values were forcibly imposed on the people and implanted here in the society. Instead of the spirit of sharing the value of acquisition was introduced: the legitimacy of violence replaced that of non-violence: killing and torture were given moral justification; lying, use of alcohol, unpleasant speech, inequality and claiming other people's property became accepted values. Consequently instead of a sharing, equal, non-violent society, having economic and social activities with a human touch, endless other activities that had little to do with human beings and were not centred on human beings came into existence. The Buddhist monk gradually lost his social and economic power and political power, the community followed suit. The traditional morality that sustained a particular socio-political system was, perforce, completely superseded.

There is no doubt that the traditional moral basis suffered heavily on various occasions even in the past. But then the entire socio-economic system of values was not completely removed and replaced by a novel system that had no relevance to the Sri Lankan experience. Today what has happened is the complete overturning of all values by the use of colonial political machinery and thereafter neo-colonial economic and social superiority.

Sri Lanka's sufferings today could be traced to this "anomie" due to the hiatus established with the complete break-up of the fabric of traditional morality. The tragedy is that although the traditional system of morality in its relations to political and social institutions is there no more,

still there remains in individuals and groups remnants of such traditional morality. These people, who are guided by the traditional moral sense view modern values brought to us from the West critically. The hiatus created in society by the introduction of foreign systems has provided a very good breeding ground for the new values such as violence, enmity, hatred, selfishness, endless acquisition of material items or property or wealth, exploitation of others, use of intoxicants, lying, stealing, etc. The proliferation of these values which are quite contrary to the spirit of traditional morality has become possible because of modern political and social institutions that see such values as important and relevant to the present day. But, traditional morality had it otherwise. It was centred on human beings and the human being was all that mattered to traditional morality.

Compartmentalisation is a feature of modern Western society. In the Western system, modern medical doctors treat the disease, not the patient. Modern development planners focus on economics instead of on the moral, cultural, social, political and psychological aspects of human society. Of course, this was not always the case. Thus, it was a more holistic view of life that impelled the 18th Century English Poet, Alexander Pope, to say, 'All are but parts of one stupendous whole, whose body nature is, and God the soul.' Not merely in Asia, but in the West as well there was a time when the individual considered himself to be a part of a living process in which his interests were tied up with those of the entire community.

Similarly, the destiny of the community was seen as indivisible from the well being of all life. I can think of no more beautiful words to put this idea across than the response of Seattle in 1854 to the US Government's demand that he sell his tribal lands.

"Every part of this earth is sacred to my people," said the great Chief in his reply. "Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and humming insect is holy to the memory and experience

of my people." Then referring to his military conquerors, he said "The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on... I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie left by the white man who shot them from a passing train.... If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of the spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected."

Seattle's thoughts could be said to represent those of traditional morality in Sri Lanka too. When land was cleared for shifting agriculture, the peasants took care to leave the trunks of the great trees intact so that after the harvest of grain was collected the forest would grow back again. But the British when they came did not understand this. So they called it "slash and burn" agriculture. The peasants themselves called it "lighting up" of the land to clear the overhead foliage so that the sunlight could reach the ground. But today under the influences of modern agricultural techniques the forests have indeed been destroyed. At the present rate of destruction, Sri Lanka's natural forests will be extinct in 25 years.

The Production – Centred Society

Environmental destruction results from the erosion of values that emphasise the well-beings of all living creatures, whether human, plant or animal. Thus, as I said before values such as kindness, compassion, pleasant speech, equality, sharing and selflessness were regarded as the highest in traditional Sri Lankan society. By contrast, today's governmental programmes of development lay stress on material values and incentives. Materialism has become the dominant value. This is the reality notwithstanding platitudes about the caring and sharing society. Sri Lankan policy makers look longingly towards the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., Japan or Singapore for foreign aid and guidance. These countries are said to be the models to emulate. But in the spirit of open inquiry we need to ask ought they be models to copy?

For instance, the growth of the South Korean economy is connected with export-oriented industries where the work is most intense, management is especially strict and labour conditions very harsh. In South Korea the working day lasts 10 hours throughout the 6-day long working week and annual vacations never exceed 3-4 days. On the other hand, literacy is 90% and one young South Korean in five studies at a university. To my mind, the question as to which of these values are worthy of emulation requires an answer on the basis of what is people-centred.

The model of development that the economically successful countries have followed can be called production-centred. I say this because the production of an ever increasing quantity of goods and services, along with the desire to consume them, appears to be the underlying reality of the model. This is true of both capitalist and socialist societies.

In production-centred societies the total perspective of human personality and sustainable relationships between man and nature is lost sight of. Human happiness is sought through the sense gratification coming from increased consumption of material goods. The higher ideals of human personality and social values are disregarded. Materially, people living in these societies may have everything that they may need. But perhaps happiness still eludes them. For, their relations are not with people, but with things such as cars, videos and swimming pools. And these things can give people no spiritual fulfilment.

Since economic efficiency is a valued goal, centralisation is the order of the day. In Sri Lanka, even the village headman is appointed by the central authorities. The present constitution concentrates tremendous power in the Executive Presidency. On the other hand, whatever the democracy that obtains in the political arena, the lack of democracy within the business enterprises of the West is the subject of much discussion in academic circles. In fact, the

kind of centrally controlled bureaucracies imposed on human societies to keep this production-centred system going is unprecedented.

The Breakdown of Morality

After more than four decades of production-centred development in Sri Lanka following independence and a decade of open-market development, a bewildering variety of imported consumer goods cause frustration among those who do not have the means to buy them. Malice, hate and envy arise in the midst of these inequities. The situation is such that Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra, the doyen of Sri Lankan culture, asks with grief, "Do people think that murder is not a sin any more? How did the Sinhalese people who killed neither an ant, nor a bug nor a fly, kill with such wanton abandon their fellow human beings and fall into such a sinful state?"

In answering this question I shall take as my point of departure the Biblical scripture which states that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." This is an entirely reasonable statement one might think, and people-centred too, in its assertion that the laws are to serve human beings.

But perhaps such a discretion to human beings to be above the law was not permissible when society was welded together by traditional morality in an organic whole, with each part perceived to be linked to another with rights that had corresponding duties, and where unity of aspirations was seen to be the order of things. Then, every individual, whether peasant or king, had a supreme goal to attend to in the form of attaining Nirvana or God.

Thus, in ancient Sri Lanka, the peasants were under a duty to provide labour to the king as lord of the land, under the "Rajakariya" system. This was above all a meritorious act that would bring benefits to all. In Rajakariya would the Buddha's edict that, "Dukkapaththaca Niddukkha, Bhayappaththaca Nibbhaya, Sokappaththaca Nissoka,

Honthu Sabbepi Panino" (May all beings overcome physical suffering, fear, mental suffering and be well and happy) be realised.

In return the righteous king would grant land tenure to the village and take upon himself the responsibility for looking after security and infrastructure. This period of Sri Lankan history saw the construction of stupendous works, both irrigational and religious, that win our admiration to this day.

But by 1802 when the British had begun their capture of Sri Lanka, they had in their own land outgrown the feudal system and its hereditary rights and duties. This they had replaced with the contractual system based on the idea of free individuals. So they abolished the Rajakariya system as it had been practised in Sri Lanka. But for their own expedience they retained the compulsory labour services. In this basic paradigm of present-day Sri Lankan reality, they found an organic institution, and took only a part.

The local people, however, soon found that the work which was done as an act of piety under their kings had degenerated under the British into an oppressive labour system with whippings.

Thus did the British destroy one of the most important institutions of traditional morality in Sri Lankan society. They failed to understand the psychological, social, cultural and religious aspects of it, but focussed only on the economic angle, and so made it a slavery. This tragic pattern is being repeated today in Sri Lanka by these local leaders who took over from where the British left. They appear not to have a real appreciation of the political institutions they have been bequeathed, and so they have no real sense of what is essential to them and what can be dispensed with.

A parallel that might make it easier to understand relates to the appreciation of art. A person is capable of genuine artistic appreciation only if he belongs to a particular

culture. His aesthetic appreciation is conditioned by the culture to which he belongs. Take for example, a Sinhala song. To appreciate it we must know Sinhala, not merely have a smattering but a complete understanding of the language. We must know not only the literal, but also the metaphorical meaning of the Sinhala words. But this is not all. We must understand the background of the song, the religious beliefs and the cultural and musical content in order to fully appreciate it. Unlike Western music, for instance, which is based on harmony, traditional Sinhala music is based or rāga and tāla. A person belonging to a different culture can, therefore, respond only in part to a Sinhala song.

Despite Macauley's famous minute that the task of the British educational system in India should be to create an Indian leadership that, apart from physical appearance, was British in sympathies, habits and outlook, what the British did leave behind in Sri Lanka was an anglicised local elite that was neither British nor Sri Lankan. This elite has failed to appreciate the inner spirit of the political institutions they have inherited. They appear not to have a sense of the integrity of the institutions they preside over and instead pay great attention to the external trappings. Today, this elite has distorted the meaning of the Biblical scripture I quoted earlier to mean that, whether in politics or art, "anything goes."

Modern Sri Lankan society has borrowed the concept of government based on parliamentary democracy that was an organic growth in the West. But the democratic spirit that prevails in the West of free inquiry, openness to criticism and the absence of hierarchy, does not exist in Sri Lanka. The inner spirit is more of the traditional kingship. But it is a kingship that is perverted by undigested Western notions such as, "individual rights" and "democratic centralisation". Thus, the rulers wield power directed towards narrow ends, without taking on the responsibility for the welfare of all.

In the West, on the other hand, parliamentary democracy relies on a free press, an independent judiciary, a bill of human rights and free and fair elections. Let us take the press as an example. Underlying the traditional Western approach to the press is the belief in the need for a market place of ideas where a diversity of views may be expressed and evaluated. Within this tradition, the freedom of the press is sought to be guaranteed even in competition with the government. For, it is believed that without free political discussion, public education which is essential to the proper functioning of popular government is impossible. But in Sri Lanka, the press is viewed as just another instrument for the exercise of raw political power. With regard to human rights, the practice of torture has eroded the moral fabric of society. Indeed, torture aimed at ending terrorism had led to the equation of the law with terrorism. The violation of the sanctity of life, in turn, has set about a process of moral degeneration in all areas of life.

Of course, in the ancient past too, there were rulers who flouted the laws of their times. There were kings who ascended to the throne by brutally eliminating their brothers and protected their thrones through violence. Sri Lankan history has its share of bad kings who lay waste the lands of the people, desecrated temples and engaged in costly wars.

But there is a crucial difference between then and now. In the past the wrongdoer and everyone else, knew that a wrong was being committed. Even if the norms of traditional morality were frequently violated, the norms themselves were accepted as legitimate. Today, on the other hand, the norms themselves are being rejected.

People have grown clever and cynical. They know that the laws and political institutions are not in themselves sacred. They know they are not God-given but man-made. So they can be flouted or changed when it is expedient. Specific examples from Sri Lanka's recent political history can be cited to illustrate this point. The holding of general elections after a given period is a part of parliamentary democracy. It

is in the nature of a contract between the Government, opposition and the people. But the last two Governments in Sri Lanka used their majorities in Parliament to prolong their term in office. Now they wonder what went wrong when the very guns they imported into the country to suppress dissent are now being used against them. There is a tragic loss of sanctity. If life itself has lost its sanctity, then bribery and the rigging of elections will be tolerated. "Anything goes", as Sri Lanka slips nearer to anarchy.

Now the rulers have realised that they cannot suppress the dissenters by the force of arms alone. So they have invited them to negotiate. But can those who have shown themselves unable to respect the integrity of the institutions they preside over hope to win the trust of those who wield guns against them? People enter into negotiations only if they are reasonably confident that their interests will be met by it. But can those who have shown an utter disrespect for all moral norms negotiate with the interests of the other in mind? It is impossible.

Today, Sri Lanka has entered the worst phase of its modern history. Almost half the population lives on foodstamps. Worse, the daily death toll from landmines, rifles and bombs is anywhere between 25-50. People are afraid to sleep in their homes for they know not what the night will bring. In other parts of the country are the skeletons of what were once people's homes. Existing institutions cannot cope with the problems. There is the agony of civil war, class war, economic deprivation and mass frustration. Moral norms have dissolved. It is in this social setting that people who have lost hope in the ordinary political processes of an alien system, await a Messiah, born of the soil and steeped in its values, to declare his mission.

The Awakening Process

In all continents of the world there are organisations and movements which have successfully generated people-centred development processes. In the Asian region

there are quite a few successful attempts. What I am most familiar with is my own organisation, the Sarvodaya Movement, though I do not claim it as the most successful model. I will be more comfortable to talk of the Sarvodaya approach as a workable alternative development model, which can face upto this crisis.

The word "Sarva" in Sanskrit means all embracing, integrating everything pertaining to man, society and nature. "Udaya" means awakening or well-being. The literal meaning of "Sarvodaya" is the awakening of one and all in society in every respect. It was Mahatma Gandhi who coined this word Sarvodaya to signify the kind of society he would advocate for post-independent India. The Sri Lankan Sarvodaya Movement was inspired by Gandhian thoughts and the teachings of Lord Buddha, the best of traditional morality relevant to the cultural milieu of Sri Lanka.

The awakening of all signifies respect for human life, animal life and plant life and generally speaking, a friendly and equitable attitude to the entire living world. Such a philosophy leads one to believe in a non-violent social change.

Man's violence to man and nature must be stopped by finding and promoting a non-violent revolutionary path.

Non-violence has a number of facets. Firstly, there is non-violent resolution of personal conflicts. Secondly, non-violence should be extended to the rest of the living kingdom, namely, the animals and plants, so that each human being understands and respects the need for harmonious inter-relationship between different species for mutual survival on this planet. Thirdly, the social, political and economic structures should be structurally non-violent so that human inequality, alienation, exploitation and injustices are reduced to a minimum. This kind of structural non-violence is dependent upon the social policies adopted by governments and dominant economic organisations, as well as the strength of living cultures which can control them.

The Sarvodaya concept of development is a people-centred development process. It believes in the total awakening of the human personality, the total awakening of the family – the primary social group and community awakening. Based upon these three levels of awakening, Sarvodaya looks at urban community awakening, national awakening and global awakening processes. If we call the first three micro-awakening, the latter can be called macro-awakening.

In other words, the Sarvodaya ideology has both a spiritual and material significance relevant to the individual, the family, the village or urban community, the nation and the world. But first the individual should have a clear and integrated understanding of why, from what and how one has to liberate oneself, one's village community and so on. Unless one's ideological conditioning is non-fragmentary and embraces harmoniously one's own welfare with the welfare of others, one cannot go very far as an agent bringing about effective social change.

At Sarvodaya we point to a two-fold liberation objective that every individual should strive for. First, within one's own mind or thinking process there are certain defilements one has to recognise and strive to cleanse. Second, one has to recognise that there are unjust and immoral social-economic chains which keep the vast majority of people enslaved.

The philosophy that has influenced the Sarvodaya concept in Sri Lanka most, is the teaching of the Buddha. According to this teaching the sufferings of humanity are due to the ignorance of the true nature of things.

The three principles in Impermanence or change (Anicca), suffering (Dukka) and egolessness (Anatta) have conditioned the minds of the people in Sri Lanka for centuries. All other things in our lives, whether individual behaviour, economic development programmes or moral conduct sprang from this central Buddhist thought.

Sarvodaya's main task is to counter this erosion by bringing back into public consciousness the liberating spirit of traditional values and morality.

Development should begin with the human personality itself. Without awakening my own personality it is futile to talk of helping others to awaken their personalities.

This self-realisation process – therefore, makes us at Sarvodaya reject affluence as well as poverty as our goal in life. We will strive for a "no affluence as well as no poverty society" as our goal in life. We also reject possessive individualism as a goal in life.

A Vision of Reality

When I look around and see what nature has provided, what science has discovered, what technology has made possible, then I realise that such a no-poverty, no-affluence society is realisable not only for myself but for all the other human beings in the world. The acceptance of such a global ideal is very realistic from the point of view of realising it in practice because the resources in the world for such a life are quite adequate to satisfy the basic needs of all human beings. Similarly, human greed will give way to human beneficence, wisdom and compassion, thus paving the way to protect other species and nature also.

What Sarvodaya is trying to do is to re-build a community which will not give priority to economically sound development projects and programmes without taking into consideration their moral, social and ecological costs. Sarvodaya attempts to promote community planning and participatory learning programmes which will once again promote the shared values of traditional morality and community life.

Sarvodaya works towards a people-centred development process where participation in decision making of all those who are affected by such decision making is ensured. What is aimed at is a simpler, more effective, and more

democratic decision making process where energy, money and power will not be concentrated in centralised structures.

In 8,000 villages out of a total of 23000 villages in Sri Lanka the Sarvodaya Movement is doing its utmost to build a people-centred integrated development process which works. If it succeeds we believe that we have done a great contribution to our human civilization. In a macro-society blinded by temptations of material affluence acquired by a few at the cost of many, it is extremely difficult to implement Sarvodaya Programmes. It is easier to educate simple, unsophisticated people and get them into a community learning, planning and implementation process, than to re-educate the elite who think they control our societies. Until such time insurgencies with sophisticated weapons disturb their comfortable lives, they do not seem to realise that development has nothing to do with wealth, machines, technologies, credit and management systems, aid packages, etc. All these may be important but they are secondary. The first and foremost for development is the understanding the people should have about their own capacities to improve their quality of life and that of others.

It was in the 1950s that Sarvodaya began to think of an alternative path to development based on 'Janasaviya' or the strength of the people themselves. We saw that the custodians of traditional morality such as the Maha Sangha (Buddhist clergy) and indigenous scholars no longer occupied respected positions in society. They were powerless and had been replaced by professionals. First and foremost we have the professional politicians who occupy the most powerful position over the life and death of people. Under them are professional soldiers, technocrats, bureaucrats, engineers and so on. There is no doubt that they possess great knowledge, expertise and skills. But what is the vision of reality they have to communicate to the people who have been brought under their dependency?

What Sarvodaya aims to do is to revive the indigenous, age-old perception of reality that the people still possess and assist them to organise themselves on the basis of their own resources. Sarvodaya is active in village communities in all parts of the country. The perception of development that is shared by all of us irrespective of linguistic, racial, religious and political differences prevailing in society, is that it is an awakening process that should take place in every human being, family, occupational group, village or urban community, the national community and the world community.

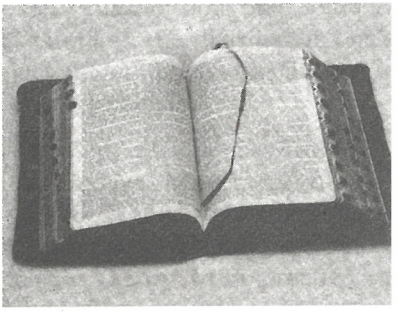
This awakening should be unfragmented and total: It should be an integrated series of total processes including spiritual, moral, social, political and economic aspects. When society is understood and defined in this manner, there will be a return to the common ground of traditional morality on which the illiterate and literate, the privileged and the underprivileged and the rulers and the ruled can all begin to have a fresh look within themselves and try to bring about a dynamic re-adjustment towards a more sustainable, equitable and value-based society.

To conclude, from ancient times to this day, norms, practices and social structures have been undergoing constant changes. Yet the vision of traditional morality, like a continuous unbreakable string, has influenced the rulers down the ages. Hence, the rulers have had to grapple with the dilemma of reconciling the qualities of the righteous ruler derived from Buddhist political theory with the needs of everyday political management. The dual imperative of respecting life on the one hand and destroying it for the "greater good" on the other hand, has created tremendous psychological stresses within rulers. This situation is no different from the times of King Dutugemunu in the 3rd century B.C. to that of modern rulers.

To me, this conflict can never be resolved so long as human beings see their interests as being opposed to one another. But by raising that level of consciousness of the

general public as we are trying to do through the Sarvodaya Movement I am confident we can bring about a harmony between traditional morality and power politics in Sri Lanka to a much greater extent than at present.

(Address given by Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne, President, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, at the Sixth East-West Philosophers' Conference held in Honolulu, Hawaii, from 30th July to 12th August, 1989)



Literacy and Sustainable Development

I am thankful to the International Council on Adult Education, ICAE, for inviting me to speak on the subject of Literacy and Sustainable Development. I always believe that the best contribution one could make to a Conference of this nature is the sharing of one's own experience on the subject under discussion. In my speech I will be following the same principle.

I draw my experiences from the 32 years of work within the Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka. The theoretical assumptions and statements I make are based on work experience. In Sarvodaya we believe that it is always best to formulate theory from practice rather than the other way around.

The theme under discussion is Literacy and Sustainable Development. This means we are discussing three sectors that are inter-related and inter-dependent; namely, Literacy, Sustainability and Development.

From time to time macro development planners and administrators of governments and inter-governmental organisations popularise certain terminologies. The newest of such terminologies is Sustainable Development. However, ideas such as sustainability, basic need satisfaction, people's participation in development, appropriate technology, empowerment of local institutions and a concern for the ecological and environmental dimensions in production processes are not new to non-governmental development organisations. NGDOs, due to the practical resource constraints under which they work, have necessarily to programme their developmental activities based on such principles. In the case of macro planners, these constraints do not exist for the most part even though their economic theories do accept limitations of resources both renewable and non-renewable. But in actual practice they have the

power to create artificial resources from borrowed time and financial credit.

However, four to five decades of wrong macro development theories and practices have destroyed the subsistence life styles of most farming communities and artisans in the poorer world. They have rapidly destroyed value systems and cultures that had survived for hundreds and even thousands of years. These theories and practices have introduced machines that replace man and created unemployment. The industries introduced have resulted in much the same processes of unemployment creation and have promoted pollution of both mind and nature and have brought about ecological disasters.

So when I hear these same people, who brought about the present state of the world with mass-poverty, mass-illiteracy and mass-depletion of resources on the one hand and placed fabulous wealth in the hands of a few, on the other hand, talking about sustainability I am suspicious of their intentions. It is the duty of the non-governmental organistions like ICAE to demand from the governments and inter-governmental organisations the matching of their words with concrete action.

Sustainable Development

Development concerns people. It is a process in which people become awakened to their individual and collective life styles they can realistically achieve, decide upon the objectives to be achieved, take cognizance of the value systems under which they have to choose their strategies, become conscious of their needs and resources, strengthen their organisational and institutional structures and move forward and upward towards an improved quality of life. Ultimate progress, I believe, is not to be found in measures of growth and income but in totality of the joy of living people can enjoy in a psychological and physical environment in which political and economic justice and social peace are ensured.

The reality we live in is a harsh one. In the South Asian region alone, from where I come, there live over a billion people. Most of these people live in conditions of oppressive poverty where hunger, disease and ignorance are rampant. What does sustainable development mean to them ?

I believe that in the first place it means that their living standards should not further worsen. But this is precisely what is happening in many countries. For instance, even during that period in the last decade when Sri Lanka's economy was registering high GNP growth rates, the distribution of income worsened and malnutrition increased. In addition, the foreign debt burden increased not two-fold but twenty-fold. Therefore, sustainable development must not only mean high macro growth rates which improve the living standards of some, but growth that does not lead to the reversal of living standards of the many.

But if we look at what happened during the past four or five decades planning was for the many by the few. There was no participation in this planning process by the poor. As a result, there was little if at all participation by the poor in the implementation of these macro plans. The poor were by-standers for the most part. In the paradise envisaged by the poet John Milton perhaps "they also serve who only stand and wait." But, alas, this is not the case on this earth.

Our greatest challenge in the coming decade is, I believe, to involve the poor in their self-development as a matter of government policy backed by the necessary political will. Such programmes have been successfully evolved during the last few decades where the poor were assisted by NGDOs to understand their problems, plan out their strategies and implement and review their progress.

In this it is essential that governments and NGDOs should come in with supportive resources to encourage and supplement the efforts of the people rather than to clamp down upon them with controlling mechanisms. The kind of

supportive resources I envisage would include genuine land reforms, accessible credit, removal of marketing constraints and pricing disincentives, and strengthening local structures, knowledge and skills.

There is a general mistake made by economists in which the subsistence economy is completely overlooked and even destroyed in the process of planning for modern development. But in community life people do not look at problems in a fragmentary way. Rather, they look at problems as a whole. A problem that is perceived by outside technocrats as a nutritional problem will be perceived by the people of the Community as a problem relating to water, communication, credit, marketing and distribution. Therefore, a unified planning process will be closer to their way of thinking, and much more likely to satisfy their needs, than in a sectoral approach.

In reflecting on the meaning of sustainable development we should always keep in mind that people are not objects of development to be fitted into this or that input-output table. The highest purpose of development is to awaken the human personality. The human personality is immeasurably more important than labour which is only a part of the human personality. This is what we mean by the sanctity of human life. Not only must it not be destroyed, but it must also be nurtured.

From this perspective we must also recognise the inter-connection between human life and all other forms of life and nature itself. In this context, nature is much more important than land as a factor of production because land is only a part of nature. Social development has more significance to the quality of people's lives than mere capital accumulation, although capital facilitates material growth. Hence, cultural identity, wisdom and value systems are more important to people in a community than entrepreneurial skills.

Thus as far as people in general are concerned sustainable development cannot be a fragmentary project. Sustainability is thought of in terms of economic indicators such as the usage of energy resources and environmental factors. Similarly, literacy also cannot be confined only to the areas of reading, writing and arithmetic. On the other hand the scope of literacy should extend itself to a total view of life, society and nature as relevant to the needs and aspirations of each community according to the developmental stage in which a particular community at a particular time is.

Conventional Literacy

Ordinarily speaking there are two levels of literacy. The first is basic literacy whereby people master the rudiments of reading, and writing and counting. In Sri Lanka we have enjoyed a literacy rate measured by these standards of over 80% during the past two decades and 90% at present. But this has not prevented the entrenchment of the two-tier political and economic system that the British left intact in Sri Lanka more than four decades ago. There is the social barrier imposed by the English Language which is spoken by no more than 7% of the population. It is confirmed in economic terms by a distribution of national income in which the top 10% receive nearly 50% of the country's income whereas the bottom 40% receive only 7%. This two-tier society is maintained by a national macro decision making process which is the preserve of the top tier.

Shortly before I sat down to write this paper, I was in an area in the North-Central region of Sri Lanka known as Padaviya. People were brought to this area about five decades ago under a government-sponsored land settlement scheme. The scheme was envisaged for 5,000 families, but today there are 20,000. For four consecutive years they have not had enough rains, and have been unable to cultivate their lands. The government has been giving them subsistence in the form of cash and food to sustain themselves – But what a helpless, impoverished life they

lead! I spoke to many adult groups that the Sarvodaya Movement had formed in that area about literacy and what it meant to them. They told me, in many different ways, that literacy for the sake of literacy was a luxury they could not afford at this time. But they were keen to educate every child in health, agriculture and agro-based cottage crafts that Sarvodaya had introduced in addition to wishing their children to be literate.

Functional Literacy

Of course, none of what I am saying will be new to you. Nobody has any doubts that mere literacy is not the answer to development. This brings us to the second type of literacy-functional literacy, which is related to the development efforts of people. However, I do not believe that either basic literacy or functional literacy or both of them together can do very much to improve the lives of the absolute poor, who in the South Asian regions amount to about 60% of the population. This is because these two types of literacy merely seek to integrate the poor into the existing society in which political and economic powers are very unequally distributed. Therefore, to merely try to integrate them better into the existing society is to permit a more efficient and larger-scale way of exploitation of the poor and powerless by the rich and powerful.

Literacy is a tool and an instrument. The way it is perceived, it can be very simplistic, like a simple hand tool or it can be more complex like a power-driven instrument or highly sophisticated like a modern computer. A simple adult literacy class in a village where some reading, writing and numerical skills are taught is a hand tool. When the same literacy class helps people to develop an awareness of the social, economic, and political milieu in which they live and helps them to improve their situation within existing structures, it is then like a power-driven instrument. When the same literacy exercise is developed into an integrated process of total ideological, technological, methodological

and structural change to bring about a total transformation of themselves and the society as a whole, then it is like a sophisticated machine.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka considers literacy as in the third category, because nothing short of a revolutionary change with mass-participation of people can bring about the much needed justice, peace and development to the economically impoverished, politically enslaved and socially deprived people in the world.

The first kind of literacy to my mind is necessary but it will not awaken the people for a fundamental change in their situation; neither can we expect all people in the world to be literate in that sense by the year 2000, if we go by our past experience. The second kind of functional literacy is useful to communities to earn a better livelihood but that too is limited in its capacity to match the oppressive forces in our highly exploitative and violent society. The third approach which I would name Enlightenment Literacy would be an all-embracing approach where primary literacy and functional literacy will also become integral components of a comprehensive strategy for total transformation of human beings and society.

Enlightenment Literacy

Being literate by the standard of enlightenment literacy would mean having a vision of life, one's place in it, and the freedom to choose one's place within this vision. In more particularistic terms of the poor for whom we are concerned, it would mean providing them with an awareness of those values that helped them to survive in a subsistence economy. Some of these would be the values of cooperation, sharing and non-violence which have been devalued in modern society where individualism, competition and violence have been given pride of place in the quest for material success. It is in such a context that top-down, technocratic and non-participatory

decision-making has triumphed over bottom-up, communitarian and participatory decision-making at an enormous cost to the marginalised majority.

The Sarvodaya Movement is an experiment in Enlightenment Literacy in Sri Lanka. Since we work in over 8,000 of the country's 25,000 villages, and have been doing so for over three decades, we are more than just an experiment;we are a macro force in the country rooted in thousands of micro-processes at the grassroots.

The aim of the Sarvodaya Movement is to create a new model of development based on sharing and community, giving priority to the satisfaction of the basic needs of the whole population, with decision-making from below and in harmony with the ecological system. In all of this, Sarvodaya's starting point is to assist people to organise themselves on the basis of their own leadership and satisfy their basic and secondary needs. Sarvodaya's community education programmes play a major role in all of these activities.

In the traditional society learning by audio-visual means, memorising and intuition were considered to be equally important. All these three forms of learning had highly developed systems of practical programmes. In fact the intuitive side, which is no longer a part of modern literacy programmes, developed through the practices of contemplation and meditation, helped to sustain the sense of humane justice.

All these systems were used to educate human beings in society. These literacy programmes were formulated and implemented in such a way that simultaneously they achieved several multifarious objectives. Firstly, people learned about their own personalities, how their psycho-physical entity called "self" came into being, its development and the final goal it needed to attain. We may call this an education for the awakening of human personality. Secondly, these programmes provided for good

family life. We may call this an education for family awakening. Thirdly, these programmes satisfied the conditions for integrated community awakening or education for sustaining and improving the life of the community as a whole. Fourthly, these programmes satisfied the need for a total vision of the larger community to which people belonged such as the country and the world.

The underlying objective of all these tools was the education of the human being and the society in which he or she lived. There was nobody who was missed. Women and children were not left out of this programme that was intended to provide the tools which people could use depending on their capabilities and the needs they wanted to satisfy.

Few would have been literate in letters and numbers in the modern sense of the word 'literacy'. But they were neither uneducated nor unskilled. There was no category of people called the educated unemployed. The former knew about his seasons, the kinds of soil which he or she dealt with, the type of seeds he or she had to use and the kind of crops he or she had to grow and the appropriate ways in which he or she should control the weeds, and manage the water. Similarly, the carpenter, the mason, the tank builder, the irrigator, and the physician had the particular skills they needed for their particular social function. As Mahatma Gandhi said, This is 'Education for Life through Life and throughout Life.'

Sarvodaya Action

The Sarvodaya Movement has a long term plan for bringing Enlightenment Literacy to the masses of the people in Sri Lanka. We take as our starting point the premise that it is the ignorance of human beings about themselves that is at the root of all their sufferings in the world. This ignorance manifests itself in the form of greed, ill-will, hatred, injustice and violence. Amidst the quest for power,

position and wealth, we see these all around us today.

In Sri Lanka we have degenerated structures that bring out not the best but the worst in human beings. We may locate their cause in the concentration of power, whether political, economic or social, that give some people arbitrary power and reduce others to powerlessness. It is a fact, however, that the bigger the structures that surround our leaders, the greater is the psychological insecurity they are subjected to. They become prisoners in their own well-fortified and superficially glamorous structures.

At the Sarvodaya Movement we leave these dominant structures alone for the time being. We do not confront them directly and end up getting caught up in the same vicious cycle of re-action, violence and hate. For over a decade now, we have been witnessing the futility of re-acting. Rather, we believe in acting. The Sarvodaya Movement does so with the poorest, strengthening them at the base, where they live.

The village communities which Sarvodaya enters go through five stages in their development process. The first state is that of psychological infrastructure-building. It begins very simply with a village level discussion about local needs and a work camp where at least one of these needs is satisfied by a voluntary pooling of available resources. At this stage itself, a nucleus of genuine leadership forms and becomes the mobilising centre for future developmental work. Often this surrounds the Sarvodaya pre-school in the village in which is located a full-time voluntary worker. There are over 6000 Sarvodaya pre-schools in the country today.

Villages enter the second stage of social infrastructure -building when they have formed one or more community groups of mothers, children, farmers, youths or elders. Sarvodaya lays a great deal of emphasis on organisation and community so that there will be systematic and shared efforts at development.

In this second stage, the village itself selects leaders for specialised training at the Sarvodaya development education centres.

The third stage is one in which the village begins to satisfy its basic needs and legally incorporate itself as a society. With this the village is entitled to open bank accounts, obtain loans and start economic activities.

The fourth and fifth stages of the Sarvodaya development process are target stages at this time. In the fourth stage villages are expected to become completely self-financing in terms of their Sarvodaya activities, including meeting the expenses of the village level Sarvodaya workers. Villages in the fifth stage are expected not only to be self-financing, but also to be in a position to help the neighbouring villages.

The third and fourth stages are the critical ones in terms of their impact upon the Englightenment Literacy of the poor and powerless. For having got organised and trained for progress, they find that there are constraints imposed upon them from beyond the village which blocks them from proceeding further.

Then they begin to realise the inequity of laws passed by decision-makers who live far away from them, both in sheer distance and also in style of life. They see that they are forbidden to cut down trees in their vicinity to feed the village wood work shop, while at the same time the government sanctions the destruction of hundreds of acres of forest that are given to foreign companies. Or they see that the savings they put into the banking system are not accessible to them because of various formalities. Or they find that the technologies accessible to them are expensive, and can be maintained only by the urban service centres.

When confronted with these problems, the people themselves see a need to become literate, not only to read and write, but also to keep accounts, and learn basic technology and management. Sarvodaya assists them in all

of this through its Development Education, Rural Technical Services and Rural Enterprises Development Services.

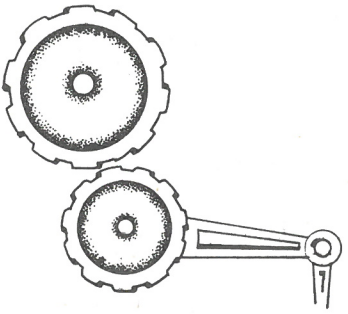
To give a concrete example, in the drought-stricken area of Padaviya, Sarvodaya has established a network of pre-schools, feeding centres, health centres, mothers, farmers and youth groups and simple credit systems with which we had introduced agro-based cottage crafts. Everywhere I went the people asked for help to build wells as there was underground water which could help them to grow sufficient food to sustain them at a non-starvation level.

The government has many thousand times greater resources than Sarvodaya has in terms of financial resources, highly trained manpower and access to foreign aid. But the government officials who control these resources are far away. They live in an entirely separate world. In a sense they are prisoners, both voluntarily and involuntarily, of a macro-system they have inherited and for lack of an alternative vision.

What we in Sarvodaya are doing in Sri Lanka is to work with the people in over 8,000 villages in order to awaken the villagers to their own self-reliance and collective participation to meet the challenge of satisfying their needs.

This awakening is an integrated one and takes place at all levels, spiritual, cultural, moral, social, economic and political. The linkages we have built between sustainable development and literacy gives me the confidence to say that Sarvodaya is pioneering a path of Enlightenment Literacy through its very humble work among the objects of conventional development. We help them to be the masters of their own destinies.

(Talk delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka, at the Fourth World Assembly of Adult Education, Sponsored by ICAE, Bangkok, Thailand, on January 1990.)



Technology and Rural Transformation

Technology and Rural Transformation

We have met here today to commemorate Chandra H. Soysa who passed away on 20th February 1987. His physical remains were laid to rest in barely twenty five square feet of land between the Christian and Buddhist parts of the Kanatta Cemetery. While his physical body *(Rūpa-Kāya)* thus was made to join the ever transforming cosmic elements of earth, water, fire and air in space, his stream of consciousness *(Vinnānasōta)* or mental body *(Manōmaya Kāya)* would have continued undergoing a trillion transformations every second into another realm of existence incomprehensible to us.

While we may have our own different ideas about his present existential form in this dependently originating transformatory process, yet we all share in common the memory of his *(Nāma-rūpa)* name-form combination or his psychophysical personality which we knew as Chandra H. Soysa. In our own streams of consciousness we continue to make him live. This is the reason why we hold commemorative events such as this memorial lecture. We may bring out a new written volume of the person and his mission we commemorate on occasions like this. We may erect a statue to perpetuate his memory. We may even establish scholarships to honour the memory of the person we were associated with and whom we loved and whose life made our lives richer. We thus do various things to perpetuate the memory of our loved ones. The degree of esteem and affection we may have had for a person while he was living may best be measured, I think, by commemorative actions of this nature we take after his death.

Perhaps in the traditional society we may have done all these things but also we would have gone further into

another dimension of actions to associate ourselves with a deceased person. We would not assume he was born on 29th January 1932 and passed away on 20th February 1987 and that was all. We would rather think that he transformed himself into another psychophysical personality with a continuity of his stream of consciousness carrying with it ingredients of form, sensations, perceptions and dispositions collectively called by Buddhists *Panchaupādānakhanda* – or five aggregates of grasping.

Therefore, as we too have these processes functioning within us even though they change at a rate faster than the speed of light with nothing substantive or absolute, yet we believe that we can make a spiritual link with him. So we may practise *Dāna* or beneficence, *Sīla* or virtue and *Bhāvanā* or meditation, thus reducing our craving, ill-will and ignorance and increasing the meritorious energy processes within our consciousness and sharing them with what is his. This can be compared to the manner that in the physical world a fast moving and precisely guided space vehicle gets linked with another similar one already in orbit. We believe that using our ability to understand our own psychophysical personality we can release meritorious processes that can help our deceased friend or relative to give him greater joy of living in his new realm of existence.

Here we see two forms of remembering a person. One is bound by time, space, objects and the phenomenon of the stream of consciousness functioning within these. For example in this particular lecture on Rural Transformation and Technology, I have to choose the boundaries within which I have to talk on this subject. I have to assume certain facts to be true and disregard others which are not relevant to the present subject under discussion during a limited period of time. Also, I have to think of my audience and the thinking of the person concerned whom we are remembering today.

The other way we can remember him is by perceiving his 55 year long existence on this planet and amidst us, as a

transitory, illusive appearance of a psychophysical personality amidst other similar manifestations of what we call objects, persons and consciousness none of which has substantiality. The latter perception is an extremely difficult mental discipline to cultivate particularly in a human society which has more or less closed its eyes to the world of spiritual realities and cosmic consciousness and which is blinded by a development exercise to give more calories and more vitality to the body, more information to the already saturated stream of consciousness and to perpetuate an endless trial and error exercise to develop institutional forms, technologies and resource combinations that would produce goods and services to gratify our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and the mental faculties associated with sensations we receive from these. At the end of this complicated exercise using our physical, mental, natural and technological resources we presume that we have improved the quality of life of so many.

An Enlightenment Philosophy

In this lecture what I am attempting to do is to look at the subject harmonising both these approaches as Chandra Soysa himself always attempted to look at problems holistically. We sometimes attempt to replace greed by needs. It is good to make a distinction between a life style which is based on endless greed which harnesses and mobilises the productive resources to produce goods and services and everything associated with them to gratify this greed, and a life style that is directed to satisfy our needs and then direct the rest of our physical and mental resources for our total personality awakening.

Of course we also can develop new terminologies such as sustainable development, appropriate technologies, employment creation and income generation and so on to theoretically explain what we do in the course of these so called development programmes. Is this enough? Is there any hope for us unless we can go even beyond the

satisfaction of material needs? I do believe that subjects like technology and rural transformation have to be dealt with in the context of a total transformation of our consciousness to enable us to perceive ourselves as an integral part of an ever changing process of mind and matter in a larger social and global context.

Our consciousness is continuously and incessantly fed by those stimuli we receive in the sensitive elements of our five senses and the memory. Once these stimuli are not there then it may be what remains are only those previous responses which may have got sublimated into a different level of our consciousness. Some may call it subconsciousness. Whatever it is there appears to be another level at which the mind can function which is no longer deluded by the sensory perceptions. If we begin to get an insight into the processes that may be functioning at that level, perhaps we might be able to enlighten ourselves further to discover a very much deeper level of the mind which is totally unconditioned either by the present or the past sensory experiences. Then we may be able to look face to face at the REALITY of mind as a transitory formation brought about by contacts *(phassa),* sensation *(vēdanā),* perceptions *(sannā),* volition *(chētanā)* and memory *(manasikāra)* which could be stopped so that we can exist at this moment without being conditioned by the past or the future. This state of existence is really existence in non-existence. It is a state where the barrier of time, space and the conditioned consciousness and everything around us falls into a cosmic totality.

It may be easy for persons who claim a kind of proprietary right to knowledge to use linguistic jargon and say "Let's come to realities. Let's not live in fantasies. What the people need is food, clothing, shelter, health, education, culture, human rights, civil rights and so on," and to dismiss this level of "action" as mere imaginations. But taking the risk of being ridiculed by such persons at times in history like the present time in which we are living some of us will

have to get up and say "Before everything else what is needed today is a total transformation of our perceptions, dispositions, volitions and consciousness." Using science and technology we may be able to modify those external stimuli and internal responses which we call sensations and perceptions. But our knowledge should not stop there assuming that state to be the reality. It may be Knowledge but not Wisdom. Knowledge without Wisdom is suicidal and self-destructive. Scientific knowledge manifested and applied in technology without wisdom has brought about our civilization and our planet into a verge of extinction.

This is why Lord Buddha in his first sermon itself stated the importance of awakening one's senses, knowledge, wisdom, science and light of enlightenment. What we need in the present times is an enlightenment philosophy. Our goal should be nothing short of total enlightenment. Our objectives and aims should be enlightenment oriented. Our organisational structures and what we call programmes and projects aimed to achieve improved quality of life, should all be the means to attain such enlightenment.

We have come to a time that we have to think in terms of not sustainable development, but enlightenment development, not functional literacy, but enlightenment literacy and so on and even to include enlightenment politics and enlightenment economics in our agendas.

There is an urgency for a fundamental transformation in our inner consciousness. It is no longer the question of one billion people, one in every four children, being malnourished or not having access to formal education. It is no longer a question of 40,000 children dying every day of malnutrition and disease in the poor two thirds of the world. It is no longer even the question of human rights and civil rights where people are discriminated against, tortured and killed for whatever reasons of caste, race, colour, ideology or for breaking moral principles or unjust laws.

It is a question of survival of both sentient and non-sentient life on this planet. In the old age of wisdom

whatever an individual thought, spoke or did was linked to the total cosmic order. In this age of science, by hard experience we have learned this truth at the cost of lethal nuclear radiations, droughts, floods, land slides, desertification, chemical pollution, acid rains, the rising of global temperature and by damaging and allowing huge holes in the Ozone layer to develop.

All these things have come to our door step with polluted air, poisonous chemicals in our streams, rivers, lakes and oceans, waterfalls, soils, and food. So talking of society at a localised level or looking at global financial stability, to me is a kind of crisis management exercise by vested interests for the survival of the privileged species of *homo sapiens* who happen to be at this time political leaders, powerful bureaucrats, technocrats and shareholders in national and multi-national, industrial and commercial establishments. To talk of rural transformation to help them in their survival game at the cost of all other species including the unprivileged *homo sapiens* is something that is not only alien to me but also is an extremely distressing exercise.

There is no way that any rural transformation for the better could be brought about with or without technology unless a transformation in our consciousness or a spiritual awakening takes place as a pre-requisite. It is only this transformation in the consciousness that can bring about a transformation in the techniques and technologies, institutions and structures, production processes and markets, political systems and administrative organizations and in life styles of the haves and the have-nots alike. It will bring about a collective consciousness where all of us begin to look at one another as well as at other living beings and the nature around us with friendliness. The Sanskrit word for friendliness is *Maithri.* The Pali word is *Mettā.* In Sinhala we call it *Mithudahama.* In Tamil we may call it *Natpu.* With whatever name we call it, it is respect for life, the most essential ingredient for global survival and progress.

A Friend to All

When the Directors of Marga discussed about the topic on which I should speak, they first suggested friendliness or *Maithri* to which I agreed. The rationale of that selection was Chandra · Soysa's cardinal virtue of being friendly towards all. With everyone of us he associated in such a manner that we felt under that he was our most dear friend. His consciousness was vibrating with *metta* – respect for life.

The humanity in him led him to *Karuna* or compassionate action. His compassionate actions took concrete form in his devoted services to the founding and development of the Marga Institute, the contribution he made to the progress of the Sarvodaya Movement, the role he played in the bringing of new dimensions to the activities of the United Nations University, the leadership and guidance he gave to IRED and the encouragement he always offered to institutions such as the Asian Institute of Rural Development, UNESCO, The Club of Rome and the International Institute of Communication among others. Similarly, he was called a global networker where organisations like South Asia Partnership was the result. It is unbelievable how a man dedicated to *metta* or respect for life can transform his mental and physical energies to global activities that bring happiness to people. Thus *Mettā* and *Karunā* gave Chandra a kind of detached and altruistic joy which I would call *Mudithā*. Godfrey Goonetilleke vividly describes this joy of living which Chandra experienced in the following words:

"These choices that he made reveal the personality of the man. They bring to light the attributes which were the most distinctive part of his character. I can still recall a half serious exchange of self-appraisal and mutual criticism in the early years of our friendship. I had mentioned that he conveyed the impression of someone who even while he enjoyed and participated in the things he chose to do, did not seem to want to belong or wholly commit himself to any group or cause or institution and he replied that life for him

seemed too rich and diverse for an exclusive commitment of the type I described. He therefore shared some of the qualities of the archetypal outsider, able both to take part enthusiastically with life he was living at any time and yet in the very centre of himself to remain outside, and be detached. To those who did not understand this aspect of his character he would sometimes appear inconsistent or even cynical."

A man enveloped in *Mettā,· Karunā* and *Muditha* necessarily evolves himself to what we call a level of *Upekkhā.* I believe Chandra's journey through the life he lived helped him to achieve a level of *Upekkha.* Literally *Upekkhā* means equanimity or looking in depth. That is the characteristic of a harmonious human personality, the characteristic of a man who is in harmony with his inner psychological processes and in harmony with his family, his place of work and in harmony with humanity as a whole. It is like a person who has been standing on one side of a river bank, looking across the water at the river bank on the other side as if there was no link between the two banks, one day realising that after all under the water the two banks meet and are one.

In a statement made by Chandra in a document he presented to the United Nations University which was published in the Marga Quarterly Journal Volume 4 No. 2 of 1977, he says:

"Since the social systems and structures of power usually direct technological development to suit the needs as they are generated by their own structures, which in developing countries are dominated by the needs of these elite groups, the demand pattern of these groups has often shifted the technological response of developing countries further away from the real needs of the people.

"The end result to this process is that the structures of technology, as they exist in developing countries, do not exist and grow together within a homogeneous framework.

At one end are the uncoordinated and fragmented structures of modern scientific knowledge, and at the other, often in opposition, the holistic but now fragmented body of traditional knowledge and technology.

"The dialectic process of interaction and interface that is envisaged in this programme is one in which the technological activation at all levels of the society leads, in the long term, to a harmonious integration of the traditional structures with the structures of modern science.

"Therefore, the first, even preliminary, technological requirement of a developing country is, it is here proposed, the establishment of an infrastructure which will permit the aggregation of cumulative and progressive stocks of technological knowledge to each level of its social framework.

"Then with adequate linkages, this infrastructure could produce checks and balances to provide the technological responses which will enable the country to develop, with self-confidence, its own technological style so that it may, ultimately, play a self-reliant role in a technologically interdependent global community."

Once Mahatma Gandhi referred to those who were tempted by Western materialist ways of life and technology as moths running towards self-destruction. Is that not what has happened to us, both materially and morally today? E.F. Schumacher was the first economist who acknowledged that without human and social development, technology – intermediate or otherwise-could achieve nothing. In our country we had a spiritual and cultural infrastructure on which we could have initiated a total process of human and social development. Instead, we allowed the havoc we are witnessing today to be brought about by blindly imitating and faithfully following a system of development which went against the value systems and ethos of most of our people. As Chandra Soysa envisioned we failed to develop our technological style and also missed the self-reliant role we

could have played in the technologically inter-dependent global community.

The Psycho-Social Context

You may wonder why I have been dwelling so much on the non-material dimensions of rural transformation. When we talk of rural transformation what is completely ignored by westernised planners, economists and technocrats is the psycho-social infrastructure within which rural society is based. In our work with the Sarvodaya Movement we always give priority to the creation of a critical mass of spiritual and psychological consciousness in the village community. This critical mass of consciousness may not be seen but its external manifestation can be observed and measured by the social mobilisation of people and practical programmes they implement on their own initiative. Formations of children's groups, mothers' groups, farmers' groups, youth groups and artisans' groups and so on build a social infrastructure which would first discover and then practise and upgrade the technologies already existing in the community.

These technologies firstly ensure the psychological and physical security of the members of the community. This is what we call in modern language the preservation of human rights and promotion of human duties as inherent ingredients of the social consciousness thus created. Food security and health-security follow on this. Underlying these threefold security formations is an enlightenment education process that takes place. Without this kind of security securely based on one's own spirituocultural edifice it is premature to talk about employment and income-generation and technology transfers. I think we should learn a serious lesson from our recent thrust for economic growth to the neglect of value systems. That is why rural communities have something to offer even at this stage for a total social awakening. As far as their spiritual goals, moral relationships, cultural life, social conduct, economic pursuits

and political organisations are concerned, the village community looks at them holistically or as an organic whole. This is a world view or set of ideas that needs to be transferred back to the urban centres and planning agencies.

The thought processes within the community and the institutional arrangements that facilitate the community functions, are invariably integrated into certain technologies which may not be seen or appreciated by those who are not an integral part of the community. Therefore, whatever technologies that outsiders may try to transfer into the rural psycho-social milieu, even if they do succeed, will become parasitical and in the long term economically as well as socially detrimental to the well-being of the community.

Technological Imbalances

One sector in which this kind of transfer of technology can be seen is the plantation sector. If we take the tea plantations, what was ours was only the virgin jungles which were a part of our natural habitat in the past in which those communities living in the vicinity were integrated. The entrepreneurship, the capital, labour, technology, organisation, markets and so on were all brought in from outside to these areas. Except the natural base everything else was an external input. The bio-region was our only input. In the course of time we took over the tea plantations and their management. Today the labour has become a part of our national community with all the rights enjoyed by other citizens. But still the technology and the bio-region have not been harmonised. If we take a close look at the plantations after they were nationalised, we could see technology failing due to inappropriate maintenance of the land and neglect of the soil contours. I believe this is one of the principal causes for the present land slides taking place in the plantation regions.

Take tobacco cultivation. Hill slopes were cleared. All trees were cut. Sometimes contour soil retention walls were

built. Quality seedlings, manure etc. were supplied at subsidised rates. Produce was bought at high prices. The farmers were better off with tobacco than with other subsistence crops. But this is only for a couple of years. After sometime the prices of inputs rise while the prices of the produce get comparatively reduced; the lethal effects of the chemical fertilisers are seen in the paddy fields below; water holes get dried up and soil erosion becomes a serious ecological problem. Whatever water resources that are left become polluted. Before they can revert back to an alternative livelihood, with the next rains and land slides, the entire living habitat is destroyed. The people are lucky if they do not get buried under the very soil that gave them sustenance.

Rubber and coconut industries are also examples of so called successful technology applications. There again we measure the success only from the point of view of the foreign exchange earnings, cash income it gives to a few proprietors of those estates and the underpaid employment given to the workers. But if we look at the total picture from an organic societal point of view, we have to conclude that whatever transformation has been brought about by those agro businesses and technologies has not resulted in a sustainable and spiritually enriching life style for the communities living either within these plantations or in their peripheries.

Let us take some examples of the applications of the imported technologies to the paddy agriculture sector. There have been numerous technological inputs and structural adjustments pertaining to the production, distribution and pricing of our staple food. Somewhere in the early eighties we read about rice being exported for the first time. We were all happy thinking that at last we had become self-sufficient in our staple food. The so called liberalised economy was expected to accelerate this process. But things reversed in no time. Recently it was reported that we have imported 250,000 tons of rice from Vietnam and Pakistan.

The latest addition to the post-independent prescriptions to the malaise in the agricultural sector is the agricultural productivity villages. It is expected to provide the farmers with knowledge and inputs to grow high income crops, acquire specialisation and become highly productive commercial enterprises. Here again is an example of technological inputs being applied in isolation from psycho-social, bio-regional and cultural considerations. In spite of all the economic and social environmental hazards we have gone through, still, we have not learned the lesson that it is not the technology or the market economy that is the determinant. The answer is the human being himself within his socio-cultural milieu and the bio-region he is living in, acting and inter-acting together as one physical bio-entity. The culture and the geography of the region become much more important for sustainable development and environmental processes than markets, technologies, external inputs and political expediencies.

Agro industrial waste is a problem that we have to tackle immediately. At the Sevanagala Sugar Plant thousands of metric tons of stillage produced are discarded into paddy fields or dumped into a river close by causing severe environmental problems. Agro industrial wastes such as rice husk produced in over 7000 rice mills counts for at least 500,000 metric tons per year. Coir dust produced from over 500 fibre mills is again in the region of 750,000 metric tons per year. But these are "waste products" which can be utilised to produce substitute energy sources for wood fuel and thereby be disposed of in such a way as not to cause environmental pollution.

Population doubles every 25 years and the demand for agricultural produce increases correspondingly. This increased demand is met first horizontally until land becomes a limiting factor and then vertically through the adaptation of new techniques.

Until recently the importance of the plantation industry was over-emphasised on the pretext that it generated the

essential foreign exchange. As a result agriculture was neglected and most of the resources were diverted to meet the needs of the plantation industry. But the value of the paddy produced exceeds the value of tea in real terms.

Expansion is reflected in changing farming systems and in this context from an extensive *chena* (shifting) cultivation with rotations ranging between 10 to 15 years to settled random systems. The consequences of this intensification is the rapid degradation of soil fertility and build up of pests and diseases through biological and physical processes leading to a condition where agriculture is not sustainable.

Generally this is clearly demonstrated by the regular loss of land to agriculture through these processes – salinity, desertification and in particular the potato problem in Nuwara Eliya. According to published data by the Department of Agriculture there is a significant difference between the total extent sown and harvested. Where yields are maintained at high levels it is through expensive inputs and the escalating costs make economic nonsense of agriculture.

Further the Sri Lankan agriculture saw an increasing dependency on agro-chemicals. Even though the rates were not high to create environmental problems to the extent that happened in industrialised countries yet the agro-chemical related deaths in Sri Lanka have been reported to be one of the highest in South East Asia.

To overcome these problems related to agriculture we ought to be looking at alternate systems, and systems that fit the environment, exploiting its resources to sustain itself by producing its own fertiliser through its own biomass, converted through specific types of micro-organisms. These biological systems should exploit the recent advances made in science by developing plants better adapted to moisture stress, with better response to organic fertilisers and with plants other than legumes capable of fixing atmospheric nitrogen.

A pre-requisite to this is a sound system of land classification based on the types of plants that it could support. This is dependent on the soil types and the prevalent climate. This is happening through people's experiences. Unfortunately it is not fast enough, and it could only be accelerated through the mobilisation of the people actively engaged in these pursuits.

Glasnost and Decentralised Choice

Any nation should have a clear cut policy on certain basic subjects that affect the community. These should be openly debated by all and the final policy formulation should be left in the hands of the people who have both the knowledge and wisdom as mentioned above. What is happening in the Soviet Union today should be a lesson and an eye-opener to us. *Perestroika* is being followed up by an unprecedented public debate and discussion, what they call *glasnost.* Knowledge without wisdom can make educated people tools in the hands of self-serving political, industrial or commercial vested interests who can become a danger to society, humanity, nature and even to the survival of other species and the plant kingdom on this earth.

Subjects like education, health, technology and environment should not be treated in an amateurish manner with every change of government and the change in cabinet personnel who are made to head the subject. When one looks at other sectors of the application of modern technology in our country and then look at the consequences, instead of a contentment and an appreciation, one gets alarmed at the negative impact these innovations have on people, their value systems, their social structures, the environment and their livelihood. It is time that institutions like Marga undertook serious studies on these aspects.

Communication technologies is another sector which has, with all its potential for a positive contribution, brought about a negative impact on rural transformation. At this

moment the Sarvodaya Research Institute is making a serious study of this.

No human community or even an individual can exist without technology. In the same manner, whether we want it or not transformations will always take place within ourselves in mind and body and also outside of ourselves in everything that exists both living and non-living. The recurring problem which the human being or human groups right from the beginning of their evolution on this earth faced, and will continue to face, is how best to integrate these transitory non-absolutist material and non-material processes into a harmonious but dynamic whole to acquire the greatest happiness for man in a healthy and sustaining natural habitat. Very often we hear of technology transfer. Sometimes this is narrowed down to the physical shifting of a machine from an industrialised country to a non-industrialised country. It may even be transfer of ideas, methodologies or techniques. Very often at the end of the exercise more problems are created than there were at the beginning as a result of this kind of technology transfer. I personally would like to see this entire expression called "technology transfer" to go out of usage.

Technology is an integral part of our existence. It may be very simplistic or as some would call it primitive. On the other hand the same kind of end result could have been achieved by using the most modern kind of technology. But the problem to be resolved is how far this technology that is applied and used or transferred and superimposed on a situation gets totally absorbed into an organic total process where harmony is maintained.

Generally we are familiar with certain policies that have been considered pertaining to scientific and technological activities by governments. The policy makers generally will go into the supply and demand sides and those activities which can be called the linkage area pertaining to science and technology. They may consider the legal devices,

organisational structures, and operational mechanisms. Further, they may also consider how it affects the functioning of the economic system such as credit, interest rates, taxation, exchange rates, exchange control, prices, marketing and government procurement, wage and labour compensation policies, foreign investments, nationalisation and industrial and agricultural policy targets. Also they would consider manpower issues, such as educational systems and training, use of skilled and professional people and their mobility and so on. All this is fine and this kind of criteria will certainly qualify the aid receivers to borrow more in the name of technology transfers. What is missing is the inputs from people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries.

When one looks at this kind of thinking pertaining to technology and development, one cannot help but perceive a highly manipulative and professional exercise on the part of political and economic interests and technocratic and bureaucratic elite establishments. Of course nowadays after committing very serious mistakes they may consider issues pertaining to the cultural life of people, the problem of exploitation and preservation of natural resources, usage of energy, environmental control, prevention of pollution and the demographic and social situations of the communities into which a particular technology is introduced. We should not forget the latest addition to this list, that is sustainability.

Unfortunately, the prevailing and the most influential technological policies pertaining to development in our time were formulated taking for granted, even at the subconscious level, that the goals the western hemisphere or the industrialised parts of the world such as Europe, North America, and Japan, have kept before themselves is indeed what would best achieve progress and human happiness for all in the world. It is this slavish and dependent mentality that has prevented us from developing our own scientific and technological philosophy and goals.

Therefore, when I hear of sustainability these days I am wondering whose sustainability the elites are talking about. Is it the sustainability of the existing system which already sustains comfortably 1.2 billion people occupying 40% of the earth's land area and controlling 80% of the world's natural resources having left the other 3.8 billion people on this earth to slowly lose not only their life support systems but also their value support systems?

Many times I have said during the last two decades that we should stop development in the way it is generally conceived in our part of the world as best as we can and as fast as we can. Similarly, I am tempted to say that the issue is not the transformation of the rural society imitating the unsustainable and parasitic modern sector. Certainly the attitude, the thinking and the policies followed by the urban elites towards the rural areas have to be radically transformed. In the same token the decision-making for rural transformation by application of science and technology should not be decided by the urban elites.

The rural people themselves should decide about the role of the basic sciences, their applications, traditional technology and even about the introduction of high technology to improve their quality of life. The national policy should be to provide sufficient knowledge and resources through formal or non-formal systems of education in the fields of basic sciences such as Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology and Basic Medical Sciences always leaving the choice of application in the hands of rural communities. Perhaps this is the task of a National Science Foundation. As far as applied sciences are concerned depending on their bio-regional situation they will have the choice to apply them in needed areas such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, medicine, health, energy, environment, pollution and earth sciences including soils, irrigation, meteorology and oceanography. It is from this stage I believe that traditional technology will undergo a transformation as desired by circumstances pertaining to the

particular bio-region and culture. Science based high technology, including micro electronics, pharmaceuticals and even bio technology will then have a base to develop upon as appropriate.

Where are those Butterflies?

Science and technology are nobody's monopoly. For millenniums many cultures have participated in their development although the last few centuries the dominance has come from Western countries and along with it devastating consequences upon non Western peoples as well as on the global environment and ecology as a whole. There are many countries in the poor world which have been cheated by unscrupulous investors with unsuited technologies. Government of industrialized countries have a moral responsibility to check them.

In February 1973 Chandra and I were together in Bangkok exploring the possibilities of biological farming. In fact after I left Bangkok he sent me all the papers connected with the experiments carried out with earthworms. The following year both of us were together in seven bio-dynamic farms in West Germany studying how the Rudolf Steiner School farmers were growing their food without using chemical fertilisers or weedicides and pesticides. Later in 1976 Chandra toured China to study people's communes. Some of the results of these efforts can be seen in Sarvodaya farms in the dry zone, the systems which we have named ecological or natural farming.

Modern production puts enormous strain on the bio-region. Its basic principles took shape in the period of the industrial revolution two to three centuries ago. At that time when the levels of population and production were a small fraction of what they are today, the equilibrium of nature and the fact that its resources were irrecoverable was not taken into account in the costing process. Both then and until very recently no one could conceive of large scale transformations of nature. Nor could the tremendous

potential for the re-making of the environment be seen. But times have changed.

The progress of science and technology in isolation from mankind and nature has led to a narrow understanding of it as the sum total of scientific and technological achievements. But these are really beneficial when they accord with the needs of people and with their lives. Similarly, scientific and technological progress is ecologically useful only when it is in harmony with nature, and when its achievements harmonise with the evolution and potential of nature.

During the first part of this month I walked for 8 days in a Peace March organised by Sarvodaya over roads that twisted and curved for 70 miles through tea estates, patches of forest, and signs of landslides. Here was no better evidence of the continuing reality of 19th century industrial values where the maximum productivity was sought from the natural system, through mono-culture, whereas nature's endeavour was to preserve the maximum stability through greater variety. Even the slopes that exceeded 60 degrees were planted with tea bushes, and through the deceptive covering of green, one could see the bare eroded rocky remains of what was once fertile topsoil. The direct human costs to achieve this were and remain enormous. Thousands died while being shipped to the estates like cattle; and even today, while the estate workers have got equality before the law, their quality of life and culture remains abysmally low. Then of course there are the landslides that leave entire village communities destitute.

I would advocate that at least one principle should be followed in the introduction of scientific and technological achievements if we are to combine them with the interests of people and the environment. Only the people living in a given region should decide, in an atmosphere of full ecological glasnost and democracy whether and what scientific and technological innovations should be introduced to their region. This principle is most grotesquely violated as a rule at present.

The fundamental alienation that has arisen in this country can be seen in the behaviour of those youthful insurgents who destroyed electricity generators, pylons, post offices and buses. This was because the governing class in this country has been unable to implant in the minds of those young men and women that their individual personalities are an inseparable and living part of the regions in which they live and of their country.

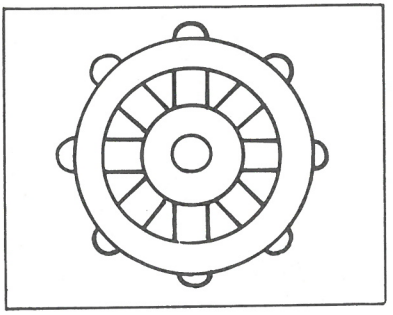
For instance, over the past decade, many giant projects in irrigation and power generation were completed. But by the side of the huge dams are bare fields. Under the electricity lines which carry power from those dams to cities and factories live people in temporary huts without access to the electricity. They had no voice in the decisions that led to the expenditure of so much of the country's resources for a development that has scarcely benefited them.

It is obvious to me that a production-centred, centralised and alienating pattern of development has been accepted by Sri Lanka's elite and their social scientists. This "universal" development concept helps to explain their own well-being and relative affluence. "The fortunate is seldom satisfied with the fact of being fortunate," said Max Weber. "Beyond this he needs to know that he has a right to his good fortune." The view of development held by our elites serves to legitimise the relative affluence of the "functional elites in a developing society". But the moment they are totally honest and self-critical they will have to confess that within the paradigm of their development the common man and woman can never hope to attain this type of affluence. Then what is the point of this development?

And at what cost? To human values? To the environment? Where are the bunches of butterflies we used to chase about in our young days, but which our elders would caution us we should never touch? So that the "powder" on their wings would remain and their lives would be preserved? So when Chandra Soysa wrote me that letter

while he was abroad about earthworms to enhance the fertility of the soil he was being true to the traditions of his forefathers. Much before a concern for natural farming and ecology had become prominent, Chandra had the prescience to see the inter-connection between mankind, his fellow creatures and the environment. Until we awaken to his insight our civilisation, like the earthworm, will continue to die from the poisoning that results from our alienation from one another and the bio-region in which we all live and have our being.

(Speech delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, at the Inaugural Chandra H. Soysa Memorial Lecture at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Colombo on 23rd March 1990.)



Village Re-awakening and Individual Rights

I thank the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the Club of Rome for inviting me to this conference and also for requesting me to make a brief presentation on the subject of *"Village Re-Awakening"* under the broad theme of *"Re-Conquering Individual Rights."*

I will speak on this subject based on my experience with the *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* of Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya has worked in villages of Sri Lanka for over *32 years* now. We are working in over *8,200 villages* which is more than one third of the village communities in Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya is engaged in all aspects of village development under ten broad Basic Human Needs. They are *environment, water, clothing, food, housing, health care, energy, communication, education and cultural and spiritual needs.* Villagers design their own programmes and implement them in an *integrated* manner.

We consider the *village* (or the *urban)* community to be at the centre of human development. The village community is midway between personality and family awakening on the one hand and national and global awakening on the other. Therefore the foundation for the awakening *processes we are releasing* in the field of self-development is the village community.

Integrated Life Processes

Sarvodaya means the awakening of all in every aspect of human life. At the levels of the human being, the family, the village and urban community, the national and the world community, we believe in *six aspects of integrated development.* They are *spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political and economic.* For a world where peace, justice, and prosperity will prevail, we believe that human beings and society should *awaken simultaneously* at all these levels. What is meant by spiritual development is a process of awakening to inner depths of human personality where the human beings

begin to develop *self-realization*; to realize that *greed, illwill and ignorance of reality* are at the root of all unhappiness and to awaken one's personality to *beneficence, love and enlightenment.*

By moral awakening is understood a nobler level of human inter-personal relationships where respect for all persons irrespective of their caste, race, religion, nationality or social status, is maintained in one's thoughts, words and deeds. By *cultural* development we mean a pattern of living where the sum total of material and spiritual needs satisfaction leads the community to a contented and peaceful society which we have named a *no-poverty, no-affluence society.* By *social* development we mean progress in sectors like community participation, community leadership, community education, community health, community integration, basic human rights and duties and peace. Bringing about improvement in all these sectors is social awakening. In case of *economic* development we strive to build our communities to satisfy their *basic and secondary human needs,* reducing exploitation to a minimum by co-operative endeavours and also safe-guarding environmental and ecological cleanliness and sustainability. By *political* awakening Sarvodaya conceives of a political order where maximum people's participation in decentralised participatory democracy is ensured.

The village community therefore, is right at the centre to realise these lofty ideals.

The Roots of Authoritarianism

In so placing the village at the centre of development Sarvodaya is swimming against the tide, at least in relation to the conventional development models practised in the Third and Fourth Worlds. In the countries of *Asia, Africa and Latin America* the *village community is at the periphery of development.* In *Europe,* however, for the past several decades a reverse process can be seen that is culminating in the *dismantling of the centralised state.* The European Economic

Community has created larger and looser continental system of governance with greater decentralisation of authority to the local level. But in the Third World, the centralised state continues to remain the most potent bastion of power, status and privilege. Within massive state structures and impersonal bureaucracies are to be found the seeds of authoritarianism and the logic of macro-level decision-making that violates individual human rights.

Excessive power when it is wielded by corruptible human beings inevitably, I would say, creates alienation and anti-democratic authoritarian tendencies. This can be seen even in the area of economic planning.

For instance, in Sri Lanka, most of the capital intensive and large scale economic projects have for the most part bypassed village communities leaving them stagnant and dependent. What is more, large-scale development requires highly centralised control which alienates people and weakens democratic checks and balances. When people have no part in decisions that affect their lives, more and more violent forms of social change emerge, and we see that individual human rights are sacrificed to larger objectives of doubtful achievability.

Further, as the Sri Lankan example so clearly shows the destruction of community institutions and the politicisation of communities by the struggle for decision-making power at the centre has led to authoritarian tendencies in both the government and opposition. The militant movements that have rebelled against governmental authority are examples of highly authoritarian organisations and ideologies. Individual human rights may protect the individual from the government but the system of democracy itself can only be protected if there is a countervailing strength at the level of the community.

Strengthening the Base

In contrast to centralised and top-down development models, Sarvodaya aims to strengthen village level communities so that they can take up on more and more of

the responsibility for their own development. Sarvodaya supports this development through a carefully selected set of specialised services designed to reach the villages.

The village communities which Sarvodaya enters go through *five stages in their development process.* The first stage is that of *psychological infrastructure building.* It begins quite simply with a village level discussion about local needs and organizing self-help activities. Villages enter the second stage of *social infrastructure* building when they have formed one or more community groups, of farmers, mothers, children, youth and elders.

The third stage of the Sarvodaya developmental process is a very critical one. At this stage the village is organised to *satisfy* its own basic and secondary needs.

In addition the village Sarvodaya groups are brought together and *institutionalised* as a legally incorporated body which is entitled to open its own bank account, obtain loans and start economic activities with support from District and National level Sarvodaya structures. Villages in the fourth stage are expected to become self-financing in their Sarvodaya activity and they assist neighbouring villages as well in their fifth stage. As village communities go through these stages the three principles we emphasise are those of *self reliance, community participation and planned action.* Every village community is assisted to develop itself into a legally incorporated village society. Similarly, clusters of five villages and then four clusters which make up a division and finally 10 - 15 divisions which make up a district are all encouraged to build themselves into legally incorporated entities.

Participatory Development

According to the levels at which rural communities are organised they are able to undertake a variety of developmental, welfare and even relief and rehabilitation activities. This kind of participatory development from below is the strength of the Sarvodaya Movement as a national force. At the district and national levels there are specialised,

institutional arrangements to support the village level activities with technical expertise and other resources needed from outside.

Ideologically we believe that poverty, ill health, violence, violation of human rights and a myriad of other ills that plague our society can only be eliminated if this kind of human scale groups are helped to be organised with appropriate spiritual, organisational, technical, managerial and financial inputs. When this total process of awakening is considered on a national scale we believe that many, if not most of the existing economic, social and political injustices that are institutionalised in our societies can be removed by non-violent, developmental efforts without involvement in partisan political confrontations.

People's Power

We live in an age where communications systems are highly developed. If the advances in modern communication systems could be utilised for this kind of bottom up process with a horizontal integrational process, then we believe the developmental inputs that are provided by governmental and international agencies can be more effectively utilised by the people themselves for their own development.

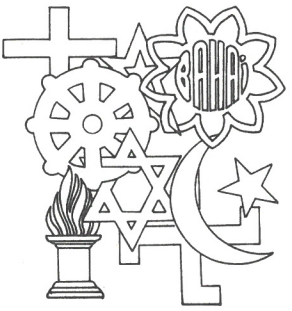
At the same time many constraints that exist in the form of political economic and bureaucratic structures could be replaced by people's power.

Community organisations whether they be village societies, trade unions, professional associations or consumer protection societies offer individuals an opportunity to experience democratic participation at the level at which they live or work. These are the training grounds for citizenship and democratic practice. It is here that the capacity for constructive dialogue which constitutes the core of the democratic process is gained. If these institutions do not exist to protect local interests then the scope for authoritarianism is enlarged. The individuals who wield institutional power need to have not only the ability to make out their own cases, but

also the ability to see opposing points of view and the courage to discard their own positions if it makes less sense than someone else's.

Sarvodaya's village re-awakening work involves engaging in open dialogue with people, mobilising village communities, training young leaders and forming village interest groups. Through these processes Sarvodaya is quietly but surely strengthening those grassroots and intermediary institutions in Sri Lanka which are the only self-sustaining bulwarks against authoritarianism and the violation of individual human rights.

(Talk delivered by Dr A T Ariyaratne, President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka at the Tokyo NGO Meeting in Japan on 3rd July 1990.)



"The World's Religions for
The World's Children"

I am thankful to Dr John B. Taylor, Secretary General of the World Conference on Religion and Peace for inviting me to this important meeting. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka which I represent has placed great trust in UNICEF for promoting the well-being of children in the world and has given it unstinted co-operation for three decades. We are happy that religious leaders have come forward to give support and leadership to the cause of children. WCRP and UNICEF have to be congratulated for holding this conference particularly on the eve of the World Summit for Children.

The adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child opens a new chapter in our common global struggle for a World where the sanctity, the security and the dignity of the child as an equal and total human personality will be ensured. We should now endeavour to put all our efforts to achieve the ratification of this convention by all governments and then mobilise all our resources locally, nationally, regionally and globally to implement its contents. In the process of ratification of this convention and its implementation a spiritual thrust, which I believe the religious leaders can give, will be of utmost importance.

We, in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, work with children in 8,200 villages of our country. This is about a quarter of the total child population in our villages. These children belong to different races and religions in the country but according to the Sarvodaya philosophy of the Awakening of All they all are treated as children of one human family. Hence, without any discrimination and in complete harmony we have been able to develop programmes and implement them throughout our country helping children to awaken their total personalities. Even during the last seven years of violent conflicts in our country we have been able to continue with our Children's Services Programmes uninterruptedly due to the general recognition this work has received from all the conflicting parties concerned.

Sarvodaya Children's Services fall into two broad categories, namely, the Early Childhood Development Programme designed for children under the age of six and the General Children's Services meant for children in the age group of six to sixteen. The goal is to promote a holistic sustainable community approach to the development of children.

Among the objectives of the programme are –

(a) to develop and operate community based (both rural and urban) programmes for psycho-social and physical development of young children.

(b) To educate parents, especially mothers in child care especially in health and nutrition.

(c) To establish community supported child development centres (pre-schools) to assist in the cognitive, psycho-motor and affective development of young children.

(d) To assist village and urban communities to obtain public sector health services for pregnant and lactating mothers and young children.

(e) To provide emergency relief to children and mothers affected by man made violent conflicts and natural disasters.

(f) To provide institutional care and community based relief and rehabilitation services for malnourished, socially handicapped, physically disabled and mentally defective children.

(g) To educate and train selected village personnel to organise and conduct child development services with community and public health sector support.

(h) To introduce progressively to older children awareness on their own personality awakening, protection from and non-violent action against alcoholism, drug addiction, child abuse, and such other social evils.

(i) To awaken children to oneness of humanity, environmental protection, non-violence, justice and

peace, and to enable them to acquire leadership and organisational skills to engage themselves in creative and constructive programmes to build public opinion for what is good and against what is evil.

(j) To help mothers' groups to organise themselves amd their community to play increasingly decisive roles in the overall awakening of their villages in respect of spiritual, cultural, social, economic and political development.

(k) To awaken the awareness of rulers and other important sectors, such as the administrators and the media, by concrete, people-centered, simple, low-cost action programmes spear-headed by children and mothers, that peace, justice and progress can be achieved by non-violent bottom-up development processes.

To realise the above objectives Sarvodaya has developed a variety of children's and mothers' participatory development activities. These were developed over a period of thirty years as people's responses to challenges they faced. These were the results of a process of trial and error. The Gandhian ideal of Sarvodaya – the Welfare of All – interpreted as the Awakening of All in the spirit of Buddha's teachings, permeates through all these activities which are interwoven with one another. Sarvodaya children's programmes are also integrated with other Sarvodaya programmes such as Integrated Community Development, Community-based Relief and Rehabilitation programmes, Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services and Sarvodaya Domestic and Community Technical Services, all of which are carried out to empower the weakest and poorest in our societies to build up a capacity for self-development.

The community level Sarvodaya Shramadana Society is the basic organisational structure that is responsible for the planning and implementation of the above programmes. All other divisional, district and national institutions are there to assist these societies in whatever ways they need. Every village

society is registered with the appropriate government authority as an independent legal entity. They function with an executive board elected by the members. Children above seven years of age are entitled to be full members of the village society. According to the rules of the society it is mandatory to have at least three children between 7 and 16 years of age in the executive committee of the village society. Similarly three mothers also must be elected to the committee. In this manner the interests of children and mothers are sought to be represented.

The Buddhist Perspective

Now I come to the Buddhist perspective on child development as understood and practised by us. I am doing this as I was especially requested by the organisers to deal with the subject in that manner. What Sarvodaya has translated into globally applicable development actions are the universal teachings of the Buddha. Buddha's teaching is based on a profound vision of reality. It is universal in outlook and application. Buddha provided us with a theory of knowledge and an ethical code which we may use to acquire wisdom and supreme happiness if we so desire. He did not compel us to do anything or follow Him.

The wealth of teachings contained in the sermons of Lord Buddha about the well-being and awakening of children, mothers and others in the community are numerous and varied. For over two thousand five hundred years those who followed His teachings applied them to various life situations. The customs, practices and traditions developed from them came down from generation to generation.

We, in Sarvodaya, realised their values to modern day society and revived many of them in our village programmes. Buddhist monks well versed in the Dhamma, Buddha's teachings, played a great motivational, educational and even an organisational role in incorporating these values and traditions into our child survival and development programmes.

Buddha did not place the personality of the child at a lower level than that of an adult. In the Sansaric journey of endless births and deaths one human being in one life cannot lay claims of superiority over others on account of one's advanced age, lineage, social status, wealth, education and so on. What is important is for all alike to strive to the maximum in this short span of life to understand the true nature of existence. This cannot be done unless one treads a path leading to non-greed, non-illwill and non-ignorance. Out of all beings the human being has the greatest potential to achieve this state of self-realisation by perfecting the qualities of loving kindness, sharing or beneficence, morality, concentration (of the mind) and wisdom.

So, what matters is not the chronological age of a mortal person in this world but his or her spiritual maturity which would consummate in the attainment of Nirvana – the ultimate deliverance from the cycle of births and deaths and suffering. From the time of the Buddha in the sixth century B.C. upto several centuries later such as the period of Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. Buddhist texts mention young children who had attained higher stages of enlightenment and had become fully enlightened and even become Arahants.

Even Asoka who was a ruthless ruler who killed millions of people including his brothers to become the supreme ruler of India was converted to follow the teachings of the Buddha by a seven year old enlightened novice monk Sumana Samanera. Asoka came to be known as Dharmasoka – Asoka the Righteous – after that and his record of service to humanity as a ruler is not surpassed by anyone else to this day.

Thus the potentiality of children is not unequal to any mature adult person. Society should recognise this and make provision for that potential to evolve and develop for the good of all. Buddha clearly explains through experientially verifiable concepts how one is created by oneself. Our thoughts are the forerunners of what we are in the realm of morality and all other phenomena we have created. As far as our physical

realm is concerned we are determined by the web of inter-dependence. Through the Law of Dependent Origination Buddha explained how our stream of consciousness has a continuity from birth to birth until such time Kamma, the fuel for rebirth, is completely destroyed. But the law of kamma is only one factor that determines our being at a particular time. There are four other cosmic laws he enunciated, namely the cosmic law pertaining to genetic behaviour, cosmic law pertaining to seasons, cosmic law pertaining to social phenomena and the cosmic law pertaining to the thoughts that influence our personalities.

When as individuals and societies we are ignorant of the cosmic laws governing our name-form, or mind-body phenomena, society and nature, what results is the chaotic state of affairs we have in the world today.

People and communities get caught up in a vicious cycle of greed, illwill, conflict, violence, wars and collective self-destruction. The right of human beings and the rest of the animal and plant kingdom to exist on this planet is violated. Environment is destroyed and polluted. Malnutrition and diseases escalate. Poverty and powerlessness spread far and wide. Coteries of ambitious and sinful individuals take control of financial, technological, scientific and structural systems human ingenuity has discovered and created. Finally, a general loss of direction for humanity as a whole results.

The Path of Wisdom

The path to reverse this process is to go from knowledge to wisdom, from religious practices to spiritual being and from a state of organised greed and illwill to an all-pervading psychological and mental climate of beneficence, sharing and loving-kindness. "As a mother loves and protects her one and her only child cultivate loving kindness towards all beings," is the teaching of the Buddha. How many parents and adults have the wisdom to understand that there is more to the conception of a child in a mother's womb than two fertile cells combining together at the right time in a right environment?

At the conception a *'Manōmaya Kāya'* a mental body – with all its conditioned stream of consciousness enters the new biological formation giving it a psycho-physical entity of its own, which we, after its birth, call a human personality. Buddha explains human personality as an aggregate of continuously changing five-fold processes subject to the law of Dependent Origination. These are the physical body consisting of basic elements of air, water, earth and heat and the mind consisting of feelings, perceptions, dispositions and consciousness.

Besides these five ever-changing processes there is nothing in the human personality that has an absolute existence. It is the Right Understanding of this reality that leads human beings towards Right Thoughts, Right Words, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Awareness and Right Concentration. That is the Noble Eightfold Path that Lord Buddha advised us to follow to attain supreme happiness.

If human civilisation is not to repeat its mistakes done in the twentieth century in the twenty first century also, with perhaps worse consequences, the vast expanse of prevailing human knowledge has to be qualitatively improved with this basic wisdom of 'being.' It is this wisdom that will translate itself into action right from the early childhood development of a human being.

The physical nutritional and health condition of the expectant mother, her psychological state and the physical and psychological environment of the family, all affect the growing child in the mother's womb. Buddha taught Arahat Angulimala an enlightened disciple a Sutra with which he was asked to bless an expectant mother. Even today this Sutra is chanted in Buddhist homes where mothers expect children. The precautions connected with pregnancy, child delivery, safety of both the mother and the child, practices connected with breast-feeding, supplementary foods, sanitary habits, naming the child, exposure of the child to the outside world, teaching the first letters and gradual socialisation and so on were all grounded on principles and customs where physical,

spiritual and social well-being of the child was taken into consideration.

The rights and duties of the husband towards the wife, wife towards the husband, parents towards the children, children towards parents, employers towards employees, employees towards employers, rulers towards the ruled and the ruled towards the rulers and so on are very clearly explained by the Buddha in a Sutra He preached to a householder called Singala.

We are attempting to remind ourselves as well as others of the values of these teachings today.

Sarvodaya Movement, therefore, attempts to work with what we call the first principles pertaining to the human being, society and nature. We begin with human personality awakening, family awakening and village (or urban community) awakening. We try to strengthen and empower the community in every respect, awareness building, resource preservation and utilisation, satisfying basic and secondary human needs, building democratic peoples participatory power structures and so on. The child and mother come into this process as equal participants. The principal motivation for this is not the religious form but the spiritual content of religion. We want to create a critical mass of spiritual consciousness which we believe will spread across our country and the world to build a sustainable society which we have named a no-poverty no-affluence society. What better approach can we think of to realise this ideal than one where spiritual leaders and children join hands! Let us reach each other. Perhaps if we reach children now they may give us a helping hand in the year 2000.

(From the talk delivered by Dr A T Ariyaratne, President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, in Princeton 1990.07.25)

Our Common Future:
A Liberated Personality in a Liberated Society

A liberated personality in a liberated society

I am deeply moved by the decision of the International Assembly of the International Organisation of Good Templars to give me the August Forel Award for 1990. On behalf of numerous colleagues associated with me in different ways in my own land of birth, Sri Lanka, and in many other countries to promote the ideal of the Awakening of All, Sarvodaya, I accept this prestigious Award. I thank you very sincerely for this kindness.

This is an appropriate occasion to recollect, to revalue and reawaken the thoughts and actions of Dr August Forel who passed away nearly sixty years ago. His memory should inspire us to acquire more knowledge on alcohol and harmful drugs as of the present time and commit ourselves to fight this menace on all fronts to realise our common goal of total abstinence and sobriety.

I come from a Buddhist family and cultural background. This upbringing has always helped me to look at my personality and that of others as well as at every man-made or natural phenomena around us with considerable openness and detachment. So in dealing with the subject of sobriety please bear with me if I dwell too often on Buddhist philoso - phy and ethics.

Right through our lives we, the Buddhists, are expected to abstain from five immoralities. These are – killing or taking away sentient life, stealing or acquiring by wrong means what belongs to others, sexual misconduct, uttering falsehoods or lying and consuming intoxicants.

These five forms of abstinences are known as the Five Precepts. Even before the time of the Buddha (that is prior to the sixth century B.C.) these five forms of moral conduct were recognised as minimum pre-requisites for an individual striving for a sober and spiritual life. Sobriety and progressive awakening of human personality towards total enlightenment was accepted as the essence of human life.

What was thought to be good for the individual was also accepted as good for the society as a whole. Therefore, when rulers inspired by spiritual ideals ruled our countries for centuries, the governments never encouraged any economic pursuits or social pleasures which were based on the violations of these moral principles. On the contrary they imposed sanctions against those who violated these.

If we put down these principles in a positive way they encouraged –

1) Respect for all sentient life
2) Giving others what justly belongs to them
3) Control of sensual desires
4) Adherence to Truth and
5) Leading a sober life-style or right livelihood.

The world we live in today is plagued by a myriad of ills such as suicides, homicides, terrorism, wars, exploitation of man by man, mass poverty, denial of human rights, extinction of animal and plant species, deforestation, desertification, pollution of life support systems including the air, water, food, and the ozone layer, global warming, fatal diseases such as cancer and AIDS, alcoholism and drug addiction. The causes for all these can be traced to the violation of the above ethical code.

Buddhist Teachings

In Buddha's teachings and commentaries on them written later there are many references to the evil of consuming intoxicating drinks and substances. The two Pali words *"Sura"* and *"Mera"* refer to these. *'Sura'* refers to alcoholic preparations made out of distilling starch, sweets, cereals, yeast and other mixed ingredients. *'Mera'* is the word used to refer to those that are prepared from flowers, fruits, sugarcane, juggery and bees' honey. Of course today many more poisonous chemicals and such substances are used in the preparation of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are either taken orally or directly injected into the blood stream.

In the fifth precept a Buddhist promises that – "I shall not consume *'sura meraya'* which intoxicates my mind thus leading me to heedlessness". The Pali word *'Majja'* means intoxicating and *'pama dattana'* means preventing the mind from being heedful or aware.

Mind is most supreme for the human being. Mind is the forerunner of everything a human being speaks or does. When the mind malfunctions a human being ceases to be a sober human being. He or she then becomes a danger to himself or herself and the society.

Speaking to a householder on the evil of drinking Buddha showed six immediate disadvantages, namely 'Unnecessary loss and wastage of wealth, getting involved in quarrels, getting diseased, getting a bad reputation, becoming shameless and the debilitation of the mind'.

It is interesting how in certain discourses Buddha revealed other forms of losing one's sobriety and sanity purely caused by certain mental defilements. In one discourse he mentions twenty seven factors any one of which can create a kind of pride or intoxication in one's mind which is not much dissimilar to getting intoxicated with alcohol or drugs. The word used for such kind of mental defilement is *"MADA"* – meaning a subtle arrogance or pride. We are advised to cultivate awareness in our mind so that we will not be subjected to a "MADA" originating on account of our 'high birth, noble lineage; fame, health, youth, life status, hospitality received, rewards earned, leadership achieved, prosperity enjoyed, strength and beauty of the body, knowledge and education and so on.

Here again the importance of keeping the mind always in alertness, awareness, sobriety, and in heedfulness is stressed.

In the present day world, therefore, unlike in the days of the Buddha, the traps that we human beings have to protect ourselves from, seem to be much more complex and greater in number. Therefore, I believe that if we are to build a new

world SOBRIETY has to be promoted as an indispensable value. I do also believe that sobriety has to be viewed from a point of view of totality of human personality, human society and nature.

Results of Violation

When I was preparing this address in Sri Lanka the news reached me of the outbreak of fighting between the separatists and government forces. Thousands of lives that had been flickering like candle flames on a windy night these past several months suddenly went out and our country was plunged once again into the moral darkness it has been slipping in and out this past decade.

Some of us in Sri Lanka keep on asking the question where did our country go wrong. We come up with different answers depending on whether the starting point of our analysis is that of an economist, sociologist, political scientist and so forth. But the different priorities we attach to different events and conditions ultimately depend upon the nature of our values and not on science. Values inescapably take us to religion and spiritual life which is the domain of that which we consider to be of real and lasting worth.

Modern science has sought in vain to locate a specific quality of living matter. The characteristic of life cannot be found in the chemical laboratory. That is why life itself evades analysis. What does characterise life is its organisation. It is the mutual relationship of individual elements ordered for the purpose of a common existence.

In a similar manner human beings can get together in harmony for mutual well being only to the extent that they recognise certain fundamental laws. If individuals violate these laws the institutions that they control, or the groups to which they belong, can become inhuman and destructive. At this point human beings lose control of these institutions. Instead the destructive processes that these institutions generate begin to control them.

The human being in turn begins to act like a machine. Finally, the vicious spiral becomes so uncontrollable that the mental environment gets polluted and society itself becomes violent. I am not exaggerating that when I say that Sri Lankan society is today in this state.

For example this month's bloodbath in Sri Lanka started with a trivial incident. A tailor who stitched clothes for the separatist forces fell in love with a woman in a refugee camp. The woman's husband objected to this alliance by engaging in blows with the usurper. From this simple, dispute a whole chain of events were released in which human beings armed to the teeth and prepared for hostilities in a mental environment polluted by years of distrust became machines of destruction. We, in Sri Lanka, cannot hold on to our present beliefs, attitudes, structures and practices and expect the situation to change for the better.

The question is whether this transformation is possible at institutional or structural levels only and without a prior transformation at the level of the individual and the local community. I do not believe that institutional or structural transformation can be achieved without the individual and small groups like the family who form a part and parcel of these institutions and structures themselves undergoing radical transformation.

That is why the organisation with which I work in Sri Lanka the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has given priority to the awakening of human personality within the psychological and social environment provided by the family and the local community. We strongly believe that our common future as a global community depends on the extent to which we succeed in creating world-wide processes of total personality, family and local community awakening. These micro-level processes will build themselves upto a macro-process horizontally embracing the nations and the world as a whole.

Personal Transformation

The first objective of a Sarvodaya worker is to transform himself or herself before seeking to transform the lives of others using the insights of his or her religion and values, whether they be Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Christian or any other humanistic teaching.

An important aspect of religion is to provide a vision of reality shared by the members of a community which imparts to it a cohesiveness and sense of direction. This includes values, perceptions, thoughts and practices on the basis of which that community organises itself to face problems and find solutions.

In pre-colonial Sri Lanka this vision was provided by the Buddhist philosophy with its Five Precepts, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, theory of Dependent Origination, Laws of Karma or cause and effect and so on. This vision was generally shared by all from rulers to the peasants. Of course, the level of perception of this reality by each individual would have differed, but inwardly they were resonating with a spirituality based on non-material values needed to form a community. For unlike material values which get diminished in the sharing, non-material or spiritual values such as love, compassion and respect for others get enhanced when they are shared out. But with the onset of the colonial era in the country in the sixteenth century a new outlook entered our thinking and sundered its coherence.

This was the dichotomy between the traditional and the modern that in Europe culminated in the nineteenth century. In essence, the cleavage arose from entirely dissimilar views concerning reality, specifically with regard to the world and what lay beyond it.

The traditional thought always viewed the world we live in against the background of the entire cosmos. I remember how I was taught in my youth that there were five dynamically related processes affecting the world. They were called the five-fold laws of the cosmic order, namely, the laws of

Biology, Seasons, Natural Phenomena, Cause and Effect, and Mental Phenomena. The cosmos consisted of several levels of existence in which scheme the corporeal world we know marked but the lowest. It was by observing the reflections of a higher reality, both in the signs of nature and in cosmic symbolism, that these traditional modes of thought was able to comprehend that greater part of the cosmos which lay beyond the reach of the senses and the rational mind.

But with the advent of rationalism postulated by philosophers such as Descartes, the individual was made the first reality. This modern view has led us to act as if our lives were absolutely autonomous, at least in principle. The ideal is for each to do his or her own thing. Of course, this spirit of independence was not born in modern times. Human beings have always found it difficult to submit to the demands of social life. But the particular characteristic of modern individualism is that it is considered to be the normal and necessary condition of existence.

With the downgrading of the traditional world view, human beings have lost their sense of a qualitative progress in a vertical direction and instead began to think in terms of horizontal and material progress. The after life and the responsibility for sins done in this life is denied. Material acquisition, expansion and competition have been the outcome of this outlook, and society has institutionalised the very values that in religion are known as deadly sins, namely, greed, pride, selfishness and the maxim that the end justifies the means. Such is the world we live in where crimes against humanity whether in bloody battle fields of Sri Lanka or elsewhere, or the starving lands of Ethiopia, are accepted as an unavoidable part of life. Modern thinking is indeed epitomised in the Bibilical account of Cain disowning responsibility for his brother's life.

Social Transformation

In our 8,000 villages or one third the total in Sri Lanka, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is trying to return to

people's traditional vision of the cosmic order as taught by the ancients with a critical examination of the same from modern scientific knowledge and experience. The words Sarvodaya Shramadana mean the awakening of all by the sharing of efforts, thoughts, and time. True to its name the Movement believes that development has spiritual, moral and cultural dimensions in addition to more generally accepted social, political and economic ones. It is from this standpoint that these six varieties of awakening processes are realised under various conventionally used terms such as integrated rural development, community-based rehabilitation, rural technical services and economic enterprises development programmes. But all of them are carefully arranged to bring about an integrated and interdependent system of process that bring about a qualitative and vertical impact on human beings and communities.

For example, Sarvodaya has a large community-based rehabilitation programme for drug addicts. Not only are the sick people treated for their physical condition, but they are taught meditation, reconciled with their families and imparted vocational skills so that they may emerge as whole and not as semi-healed personalities. As far as possible the community is made responsible for the sick person. Therefore, rehabilitation activities get integrated into an unbroken chain of other programmes including educational, psychological and economic ones.

We, the members of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, are proud to be a member of the International Organisation of Good Templars. We are also fortunate to have FORUT in Sri Lanka to be our close partner in our work. These associations have greatly facilitated us to expand the scope of our temperance activities to include not only drug and alcohol problems but the more fundamental problem of intemperate life-styles themselves. Thinking of Sri Lanka as a whole, I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention here the debt of gratitude millions of people in Sri Lanka owe FORUT and its representatives in Sri Lanka for the unique role they played in establishing the ADIC - Alcohol and Drug Information Centre

and SOBER. These institutions have brought Temperance, Peace and Brotherhood closer to hearts of people who came under their influence. For intemperate lifestyles can make this world a living hell for oneself and others.

The material world is good and is meant to make life happy. To deny this is to be an ascetic. In fact an adequate material provision is an essential ingredient of the good life. In human society misery often arises due to a simple lack of provision. But to deny the limitation of the material world is to be a materialist. Misery also arises when people try to make a life out of provision.

It is also clear that the world can no longer sustain the present production – centered system which is driven by human greed and material consumption. The depletion of natural resources, ecological imbalances and environmental pollution are some of the better known global hazards.

We in the Good Templars Movement have set ourselves the noble goal of striving for a better world where the values of temperance, brotherhood and peace will prevail. The challenge we need to take up is to apply these values to the whole of humanity and to the totality of human life. Sobriety should be the guiding principle of the human being and human society.

We have to struggle towards an economic model where both poverty and affluence are replaced by a more sober goal of a No-Affluence, No-Poverty society. Such a society can not only be realised for all people in the world but it will also have a balance between material and spiritual development. It will be the sustainable development in the real sense we all are looking for.

Each one of us can make a change. We can all contribute towards the building of such a consciousness among human beings. I am a strong believer that before the year 2000 the critical mass of consciousness needed to create the basis for a new world order in which sobriety, values of temperance,

brotherhood and peace will prevail can be achieved by our common efforts.

(From the speech delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, at the August Forel Oration in Copenhagan, on 9th July 1990).

Literacy and Peace Education

I wish to thank very sincerely Prof. Jong-Gon Hwang, Chairperson of ASPBAE Region 3, for inviting me to deliver the Keynote Address at this Regional Workshop on the theme "Literacy and Peace". Due to a prior commitment I made to the World Conference on Religion and Peace to be at a UNICEF Seminar in Princeton, U.S.A. I apologise to all of you for not being able to come personally to this workshop. I am grateful to Mr Ananda Jayawardene, Secretary/Co-ordinator of ASPBAE Sub Region 1, for agreeing to deliver this speech on my behalf.

Literacy, in its simplest definition, of being able to read, write and count, has become an indispensable tool for every human being in present day society, even for his or her mere survival. But even this basic skill is denied to a quarter of the world's population over fifteen years of age.

Illiteracy does not exist in a vacuum. It is an integral part of a vicious cycle of under-development including mass poverty, disease, ignorance, lack of basic human rights and non-satisfaction of basic human needs. The cumulative effect of these factors is social conflict and war.

We should not overlook the fact that illiteracy and its related factors have a global dimension. While the appalling conditions of under-development are found in non-industrialised and poor countries the causes or roots of such conditions may be traced to industrialised and rich countries. Therefore, we have to look at the problem globally, while we formulate strategies and implement our programmes both locally and globally.

For those of us who live in the Asian Region the challenge is the greatest both in numbers and seriousness of the problem. With the exception of the few newly industrialised countries and Japan the Asian region is burdened with malnutrition, disease, social conflicts, wars, lack of basic amenities and even hazards brought about by ecological environmental and pollu-

tion related factors. The challenge before us, as adult educators, is how are we going to set about doing things in the right way, mobilising everything at our disposal.

From my experience in the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement I have come to the conclusion that a three pronged attack on the causes that bring about the vicious cycle of ignorance, poverty, conflicts, war and disease is necessary to be launched through literacy work. Firstly, the conventional literacy work should go on but even at this basic level the content of education should contribute to the raising of awarness of disadvantaged people as to the reality of the causes that have degenerated their lives to the levels at which they exist now. Secondly, functional literacy programmes should be continuously upgraded to place in the hands of the people those skills such as appropriate technical, managerial and organisational skills to enable them to confront unjust economic arrangements and increase their capacity to earn an income for their labour and resources as justice demands.

Thirdly, what I call enlightenment literacy programmes should be promoted to bring about ideological and structural changes in society by non-violent constructive action.

There is a close link between injustice and violence. In the same way justice and non-violence also are inter-related. If we are to build peace we have to build non-violent structures in our societies. Unfortunately most of our social, political and economic structures are not based on justice. When for long periods of time large numbers of people are subjected to such injustices, dissatisfactions and frustrations get built-up. They culminate in physical violence against the prevailing systems. This leads to counter violence by established systems and a vicious spiral of violence and counter-violence is created. Whole societies eventually get caught up in violence and the resultant sufferings brought upon mostly innocent people are incalculable. Violence begets violence. In the process, injustices also multiply and gross violations of human rights by all parties concerned also escalate.

What I call enlightenment literacy is an effective mechanism which we, the adult educators, can use to build justice and peace in such situations. Such an approach is effective both as a preventive measure and a curative method to reverse the spiral of violence. I will give an example here from our Sri Lankan experience.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka consists of 8,200 village communities which are striving to build a new life for themselves where justice and peace can be ensured. These communities accept non-violent constructive action as their method for total awakening.

Based on the principles of self-reliance, community participation and planned programmes they are engaged in community development activities to satisfy their basic human needs pertaining to environment, water, clothing, food, housing, energy, health, communication, education, cultural and spiritual needs. These communities accept the ideal of 'Awakening of All' (Sarvodaya) and, therefore, have been able to transcend man-made barriers of caste, race, language, and religion. Within the 8,200 village communities all ethnic groups such as Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities are included and hence they are able to respect each other and work together shoulder to shoulder as one human family.

When communal violence instigated by power-hungry political groups and other vested interests started in Sri Lanka and spread throughout the country like a wild fire, Sarvodaya village communities were able to stay away from this insanity and keep their villages peaceful. Further, they were able to mobilise peace groups from their villages and organise mass peace rallies, peace marches, peace meditation programmes, peace seminars and conferences to influence others who were caught up in this wave of violence. All these programmes were what we called enlightenment-orientated peace literacy programmes.

Another dimension to this peace action was (and is) the Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Re-awakening programmes we organise and implement for the

victims of violence and war. We call this our 5-R peace programme. The 5-R programme does not discriminate against anybody. All those who are in need of help are assisted. The Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim victims who had no hand in the violence, affected combatants including the state soldiers, separatist fighters, terrorist detainees and so on become our clientele. The very fact that Sarvodaya peace workers render service to all in need of relief brings about a change in attitude in those who receive help. A kind of psychological reconciliation begins to develop. As the intensity of violence becomes less, and more sustainable work could be planned and implemented, Sarvodaya attempts to enlist these new village communities into its normal programmes, which stage of development we call the re-awakening stage.

During the course of this five-fold action programme plenty of innovative peace activities can be planned and implemented with the full participation of the affected people themselves.

I should reiterate here that we should not wait until violence erupts. We should foresee it and by integrated development programmes around traditional, functional and enlightenment literacy programmes, take action to release alternative psychological, ideological, social, economic and even non-party non-power political processes for non-violent transformation of society towards development, justice and peace. Due to forces beyond our control when violence erupts we should be able to extend this work to face the new challenge in ways I explained above. Even that kind of sad impasse should not discourage us or cause us to lose faith in our work. On the contrary we should accept that reality as a new opportunity that dawned upon us to further re-dedicate ourselves to enlighten ourselves and our fellow sisters and brothers, elders and children.

I wish the workshop all success.

(Keynote address by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne at ASPBAE Sub-Regional Workshop on Literacy and Peace Education – 22 to 29 July 1990 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia).

The Vision of a New Society

I congratulate and compliment the Asian Institute of Management and USAID for sponsoring this lecture series under the general theme "Management by Value and Vision." I do not consider myself a manager of persons, projects, programmes, resources or such other things. On the other hand I consider myself as a seeker after truth or self-realisation along with others, an explorer and a path-finder for a new society, an experimenter and a researcher with my own life processes. I always advise my colleagues also to be that. I believe that lasting human relationships have to be based on mutual sacrifice. This I chose to do by interacting with others in a sacrificial attitude in mutually constructive ways in a broad and complex environment of natural, psychological, social, economic and political forces. Therefore, the theme "Managing by Value and Vision" is a very fascinating one for me as it gives me an opportunity to reflect aloud on my experiences with you.

The subject itself demands that I deal with it as much as possible from a personal, subjective point of view rather than from an impersonal, objective perspective. However, what you are interested in is not so much my own personality awakening but the processes of awakening of millions of people who have been motivated and assisted by the Sarvodaya philosophy and programmes. I shall try to balance these two aspects as far as possible in my three talks.

In the first talk I will be dealing with our Vision of a Sarvodaya Social Order and how we went about laying a psycho-social infrastructure to give it a concrete expression. The second talk will be on Harmonising Processes and Persons with Programmes and Structures. The last talk will be on the Prospects of Making a Vision a Reality.

You may see that these three subjects I have chosen are not identical with those I have been asked to speak on by the

organisers, namely, (1) The Strategic Management of PVOs, (2) Poverty Alleviation Strategies and Approaches and (3) Planning for Development. I will relate my experiences and thoughts on all of these but I believe that I can contribute more to this series of lectures if I keep within my accepted values, goals and objectives and explain how we try to realise them in practice rather than narrow it down to material development alone.

Our vision for Sri Lanka and the world is a Sarvodaya Social Order. Sarvodaya is a compound word which we owe to Mahatma Gandhi who coined this word from two Sanskrit words *Sarvam* - meaning all, and *Udayam* - meaning well-being or welfare. A society where the well-being of all is ensured was Mahatma Gandhi's ideal, which was expressed in this word Sarvodaya. We adopted this word Sarvodaya and gave it a slightly Buddhist oriented meaning in Sri Lanka when we re-defined this word as the Awakening of All.

Sri Lanka is predominantly a Buddhist country. According to chronicles, right through its two thousand five hundred years of recorded history, in particular from the third century B.C., the teachings of the Buddha have influenced the lives of the rulers as well as the ruled. The literal meaning of the word Buddha is the Awakened One, the Enlightened One. Every human being has the potential to be awakened to reality. The essence of human life is not self-aggrandizement or self-mortification but by following the Middle Path to enlighten oneself to what is the ultimate reality and thus reach supreme and unconditioned happiness called Nirvana.

In this teaching a life-style based on poverty as well as affluence is rejected for the followers. A No-Affluence No-Poverty Society is the ideal to be pursued. In such a society efficient and non-wasteful use of natural resources, friendliness and fairness in economic pursuits and sustainable life-styles can be achieved. A political and economic system which creates least conflict and most cooperation can be made to be a reality. A harmonious relationship between material and spiritual development also can be realised. By a

decentralisation of political and economic power, human rights and human duties can be developed as strong social forces. So our interpretation of Sarvodaya as Awakening of All - the awakening of human personality as well as human society - was derived from this background of teachings of the Buddha which prevailed in our Sri Lankan culture.

In 1958 a group of us teachers and students of Nalanda College Colombo organised and conducted a study-service camp in a remote socially depressed and economically backward village during the school vacation. This was followed by scores of similar camps which later came to be known as Shramadana (gift of one's time, thoughts and effort) camps. During the ensuing four to five years thousands of students, teachers and others from hundreds of schools and other organisations joined this effort which became popular in the country as the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement - A Movement to Awaken All by the sharing or gift of one's time, thought and effort.

Nalanda is a premier Buddhist educational institution in the country. The philosophy and the spirit of Sarvodaya was such that during the first three years itself Nalanda teachers and students who pioneered the Movement were able to transcend all geographical, social and political barriers and reach all sectors of the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual Sri Lankan people. Nalandians were predominantly Sinhala by race and Buddhist by religion. From the second camp onwards they were able to encourage and persuade teachers and students from Hindu, Christian, and Muslim schools and other organisations to join with them to participate in Shramadana Camps which were organised in the most remote villages of Sri Lanka. These camps were conducted for periods ranging from one week to four weeks in not only Buddhist Sinhala villages in the South but also in Christian communities in the West Coast and Hindu and Muslim villages in the Eastern and Northern provinces of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is inhabited by a predominantly Sinhala (74%)

Buddhist (68%) majority. Out of a total population of 17 million people 18% are Tamils most of whom (85%) are Hindus. The Moor and Malay communities account for 8% of the population and are Muslims. Christians (both Catholic and Protestant) consist of 8% of the population and belong to both the Sinhala and Tamil communities. We, in Sarvodaya, from the very inception of our Movement acknowledged that injustices were imposed on the Sinhala Buddhist majority under the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British during the period 1505 to 1948. But we were convinced that in a post-independent Sri Lanka that old injustices should not give way to new ones and that the majority should now give leadership in a spirit of accommodation and equality to forge all our peoples into a nation where the awakening and well-being of all would be assured.

The traditional value system among most rural people can be summarised in the following words which is a translation of a Pali stanza recited by Buddhists.

May those who suffer (physically) overcome their suffering
May those who are in fear overcome their fear
May those who are grieving (mentally) overcome their grief
May all beings be well and happy

The same type of value system is found in the traditional Hindu society as expressed in a frequently chanted Sanskrit stanza which can be summarised as follows:-

May all beings be free from disease.
May all beings be well and happy
May I see only the goodness in others
May none come to grief and suffering due to my actions.

Tamil Hindus, the second largest group, were also discriminated against during colonial times. So it was (and it is) our firm belief that if we could promote the ideal of Sarvodaya we would revive the traditional value of being of service to all in an ethos that included the Muslims, Christians and others as well so that we could forge ourselves into one nation spiritually, psychologically, socially, economically and

politically without doing violence to the cultural values of any minority group or language.

However, by the mid-twentieth century the social, economic, bureaucratic and political elites in our country were well entrenched in the structures created by the British. They were too conditioned by western value systems and were too enamoured by the ideal of the western welfare or socialist state to subscribe to or create a vision of a new society based on our own indigenous value systems.

Their ideal was either the North American, British or the Western European model of society or the socialist model as symbolised by the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or China. The handful of visionaries who dreamt and worked for a value-based indigenous model which ensured the equality, freedom, justice and welfare of all were ridiculed, silenced and finally were forgotten.

The essence of an indigenous value system of a people is their commonly accepted spiritual view of human life and their world. In most industrialised societies transformation of life into a marketable commodity where everything appears to be interchangeable, seems to have been achieved. The dominant elitist class living in non-industrialised countries have also succeeded in establishing pockets of this kind of modern value systems amidst poverty stricken masses of people. The former mostly live in the capital and urban areas while the latter live in urban slums and rural areas.

At the time the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement was started in Sri Lanka rural masses, irrespective of their caste, class, race or religion were united into a community by a living memory of the past, ethical and moral values and their non-marketable codes of conduct. These were not unpopular subjects at the time to talk upon and defending them was not perceived as chauvinistic steps taken towards cultural totalitarianism. Turning one's back to values such as love, kindness, respect for life, friendliness, truth, non-violence and self-sacrifice was not given the post modern interpretation of being truly liberated. In other words, people and human

relationships were given priority over abstract principles. So it was comparatively easy for the Sarvodaya thought and Sarvodaya practice to spread in rural areas rather than in the urban sectors.

However, this is not to say that there were no obstacles to Sarvodaya. As we expanded our work and increased our influence in rural areas, some vested interests ranging from politicians and bureaucrats to social scientists and economists ridiculed, obstructed and harassed us when we were promoting a truly indigenous movement for development with maximum people's participation. This resistance in different forms increased as the Movement spread far and wide.

As we were well aware of the stages through which any individual or organisation trying to bring about social change has to pass through, we survived and continued our work with greater vigour. It is important here to remember Mahatma Gandhi's words as to the stages a Movement or an individual with any serious challenge to the status quo of a society has to pass through viz: - indifference, ridicule, abuse, oppression and finally acceptance or respect. We went through and are still going through these stages. Major elements of our philosophy and practice have been borrowed by the government and other developmental organisations. These include our methodologies of Shramadana, village awakening and people's participation in development. On the other hand there have been efforts to curtail our activities stemming from fear and envy on the part of some powerful politicians and bureaucrats. The nature of the new social order which we envisaged contrasted with the existing social order and was propagated by us as shown on the following chart from 1960 onwards in our published literature. Later we displayed this chart prominently on boards at all of our centres.

Looking at this chart one will realize that to bring about a transformation from the present social order to the intended Sarvodaya social order processes of changes have to be initiated simultaneously in individuals, families, village communities, urban communities, national communities and the global community.

Processes for change generated by human beings should not go against the cosmic laws which sustain nature, life on earth, human society and the mass of consciousness in human beings ensuring sanity, mutual harmony and happiness. We have always followed this principle of long-term sustainability. Processes of change should not be confused with or substituted for by projects and programmes. A process which we release can be expedited through certain means which development practitioners call projects or programmes. But their end result should be the enhancement of the transformation processes.

So we decided as clearly as possible upon the processes to be generated through individuals, families, groups and communities. Thus the personality awakening of the individual within a family awakening process and that too within a community awakening process, national awakening process and a global awakening process was the Sarvodaya Vision. These forms of interrelated processes of awakening we expressed under the following Sarvodaya objectives:-

(1). Personality Awakening *(Purna Paurushodaya)*
(2). Family Awakening *(Kutumbodaya)*
(3) Village Community Awakening *(Gramodaya)*
(4). Urban Community Awakening *(Nagarodaya)*
(5). National Awakening *(Deshodaya)*
(6). Universal or Global Awakening *(Vishvodaya)*

These six levels of human awakening processes are related to spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political aspects. We have to consider how these aspects relate to each level of individual and group awakening processes.

Let me give an example of how the Sarvodaya thought is put into Shramadana action. Shramadana is sharing or gift of one's time, thought and effort for the awakening of all. The Shramadana Camp technique is one of the ways in which a physical and psychological environment is created in a community where men, women and children all come together, work together, sing and dance together, meditate together and discuss together while accomplishing a task in the village that benefits them such as the construction of a road,

CHART 1

PRESENT SOCIAL ORDER Nature and Results	SARVODAYA SOCIAL ORDER Nature and Results
(1) Absence of self-knowledge and self-reliance.	(1) Striving for self-knowledge and self-reliance
(2) Blind imitation of materialistic values.	(2) Motivation based on spiritual values rooted in national culture.
(3) Worship of wealth, power, position, untruth, violence, and selfishness dominate.	(3) Respect for virtue, wisdom, capability, truth, non-violence, self-denial dominate.
(4) Organizations based on possessive and competitive instincts become powerful, capitalist economy, bureaucracy, and power and party politics become major social forces.	(4) Organizations based on sharing and co-operation become powerful; social trusteeship economy; people's participation in administration; and party-less people's politics become social realities.
(5) Evil in man is harnessed, society is fragmented through considerations of race, caste, class, religion, party, etc.	(5) Good in man is harnessed, society integrated as one human family.
(6) Economic resources improperly combined, production suffers, unemployment.	(6) Economic resources properly combined, production increases; employment.
(7) Import-export economy based on production of commodities inherited from colonial times, foreign debts, subjugation to neo-colonialism.	(7) Self-sufficient economy based on the primary needs of the people, national solvency, national self-respect and economic freedom.
(8) Dependence on large-scale organizations, capital intensive, wastage of human labour, corruption increases, environmental pollution.	(8) Dependence on small-scale organizations, labour-intensive, utilization of human labour, corruption decreases, protection of environment both physical and psychological.
(9) Village subserves the city, rural exodus, moral degeneration, social unrest and stagnation.	(9) Balanced rural and urban awakening, moral regeneration.
(10) Laws of punishment, instruments of law enforcement and state power increase, laws of Dharma, strength of Dharma and power of people diminish. Rulers become all powerful and people powerless.	(10) Laws of righteousness, strength of Dharma and power of the people prevail. No ruling class, people all powerful, Sarvodaya realized.

well or an irrigation canal, a soil conservation project and so on

Chart 2 shows how through Shramadana personality and group awakening process can take place.

A special feature of the Shramadana Camp is the family gathering. The village community, volunteers from neighbouring villages and cities and government officers who are invited to participate as equals at these family gatherings are present at these meetings. Seated together on the ground, this is a face to face meeting where they can share ideas, gather knowledge, surface grievances, find solutions to problems, plan various community actions, build awareness as to the reality of their marginality in society and get a glimpse of the new alternative egalitarian society Sarvodaya envisions. The ancient thought that the 'Whole of humanity is one family for the wise' is lived in the Shramadana Camp environment breaking down all man-made barriers. It is this consciousness that has to be the foundation for a new society.

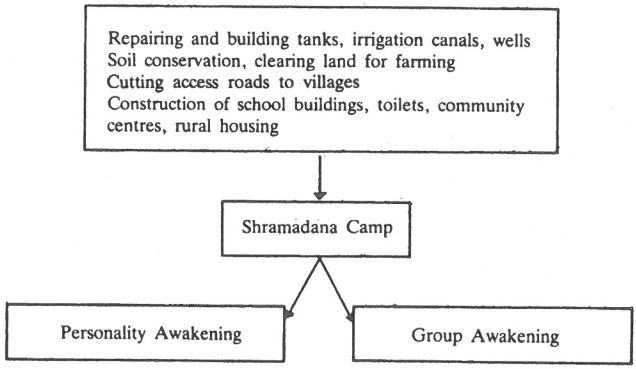
Shramadana camps and similar activities where people get opportunities to cooperate in mutually beneficial activities respecting a value system help to lay a psychological infrastructure for community-awakening. This is followed by the formation of various groups such as pre-school children, children of school-going age, youths, mothers, farmers and other occupational groups. When these groups carry out certain activities for their benefit with self-reliance and community participation then we call such a process social infra-structure building.

Progressively the communities begin to awaken further to the causes that have contributed to their present state of under-development. With genuine guidance and help they begin to take a path to remove these causes basically with their own efforts. Chart 3 shows the processes at work to transform the existing situation for a better life.

A similar cycle of dependent origination takes place in urban communities and reversing this negative process is called

Chart 2

PERSONALITY AND GROUP AWAKENING THROUGH SHRAMADANA


Repairing and building tanks, irrigation canals, wells
Soil conservation, clearing land for farming
Cutting access roads to villages
Construction of school buildings, toilets, community centres, rural housing
Shramadana Camp
Personality Awakening
Group Awakening

(1) **LOVING KINDNESS**
is the thought that motivates to work with friendliness and respect for all life.

(2) **COMPASSIONATE ACTION**
leads to action to remove causes that bring about suffering, fear and grief.

(3) **SYMPATHETIC JOY**
is the immediate result of the participation in work that makes others happy.

(4) **EQUANIMITY**
is the long-term result; a personality structure has been moulded that is unshaken by gain or loss, name or blame.

(1) **SHARING**
of labour and skills according to capacity leads to common benefits.

(2) **PLEASANT LANGUAGE**
used in direct face-to-face contacts creates a cooperative atmosphere.

(3) **CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION**
for infrastructural development benefits all.

(4) **EQUALITY**
allows for spontaneity and mutual cooperation.

Nagarodaya or Urban Community Awakening. Psychological and Social infrastructure-building processes involve individuals, families, groups or clusters of families and communities. In them a non-violent process of emancipation is generated. It is a two-fold liberation process of transforming one's inner personality and transforming the outer unjust and violent social, economic and political environment by just and non-violent means. This dual transformation, therefore, is a bottom-up development or an awakening process where the individual, family, various community groups and the village community as a whole participate.

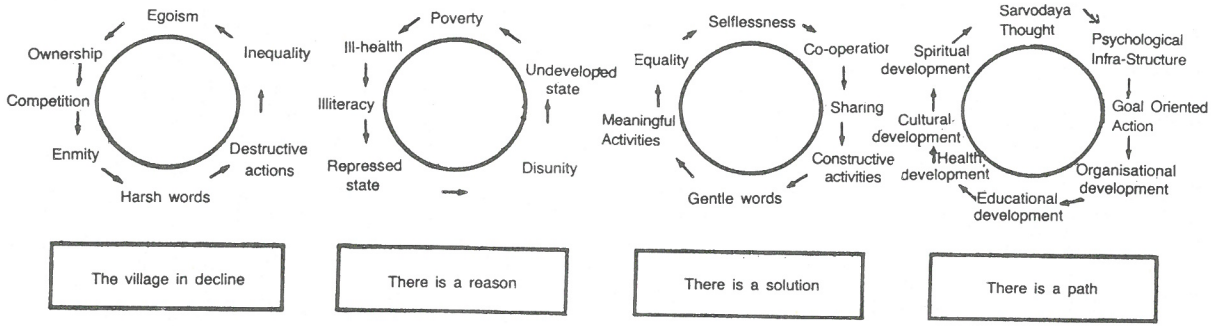
From the psycho-social infrastructure-building stage this process has to continue through the systematic satisfaction of basic human needs, first by acquiring the necessary technical, organisational and management skills to interrelate with the broader social structures. Second by establishing legally valid institutional infrastructures. Social, economic and participatory political processes get released from this stage onwards. For that facilitating institutions at different levels which strengthen the bottom-up awakening processes have to be carefully established.

Sarvodaya's package for participation and self-reliance is represented in Chart 4. (page 154)

We have succeeded in building such participatory processes from one village to a cluster of nearby five villages, from one cluster to four other clusters in a sub-district, from each sub-district to a district and from each district to all districts in our country. This has reached 8,200 villages out of a total of 23,000 villages in Sri Lanka. This kind of lateral integration of psycho-social and institutional processes at the bottom where poverty, deprivation, powerlessness, injustice, conflict, lack of basic human rights and non-satisfaction of basic and secondary human needs prevail, we believe is the foundation for real development. Our vision is an universal value-based people-centered development that is cognizant of local traditions and realities and is accommodative towards them. This is not simple decentralisation of industries, delivery mechanisms or

CHART 3

Gramodaya – Village Re-Awakening
Circles of Dependent Origination



decision-making powers. It is an evolutionary awakening process with a non-violent revolutionary stance towards the western model of production-centered and market-orientated development.

Functioning of the Infra-structure

Sarvodaya infra-structure at its lowest level is composed of groups of various ages and sex and professional groups existing in the community so that each and every member could participate in their own development. Each of these groups such as Children's, Mothers' and Farmers' etc. have their own specific activities. Representatives from these groups and other community members form the Sarvodaya Shramadana Society which is a legally recognized entity with its independent rules. It has direct access to resources and could sue and be sued, hire and fire personnel and undertake contracts and economic ventures.

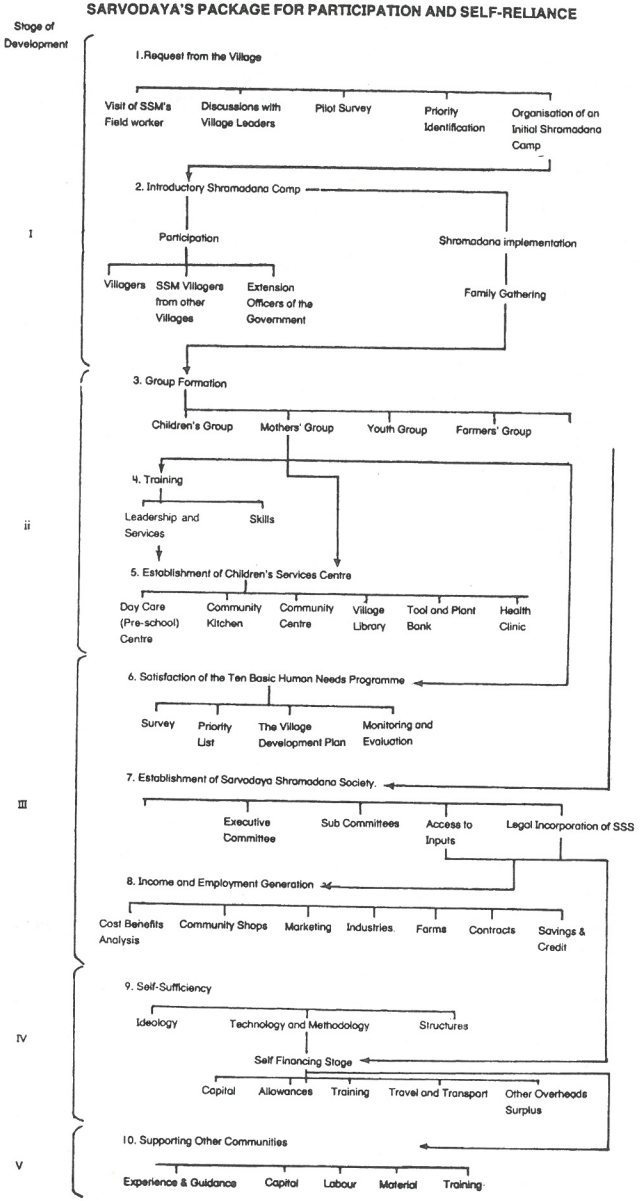
In the decision-making process related to the management of activities going on at this level, the following decision areas could be identified:

01. Identification of an entry point to the development process:
    It will be the responsibility of the village community to identify the most suitable entry point with the guidance of the Sarvodaya fulltimer in introducing an action programme. This entry point may vary from place to place depending on the existing conditions. For instance Shramadana to satisfy basic needs can be the entry point at one village while it may be accessing the extension net work for the other and giving food aid for another.

02. Man power:
    Identification of leadership for the mobilisation of village groups is the next decision area. In identifying village leadership, preference is always given to selecting functional leaders and avoiding reactionary traditional leaders of the existing power.structure. This does not imply that Sarvodaya would totally ignore the traditional leadership

CHART 4

SARVODAYA'S PACKAGE FOR PARTICIPATION AND SELF-RELIANCE



but it does encourage such leadership provided it is positive and progressive. Selection of various functional leaders for training as well is the responsibility of Sarvodaya groups. After the completion of training in various services, management and skills, these functional leaders together with the community plan out and implement further development activities.

03. Institution-Building:
This can be regarded as a vital decision area since the entire village programme is based on the institutional structure at this level. This becomes even more important in the context of badly divided village groups due to party politics. Bringing people together under a common programme with its own aims and objectives is no easy task. Decision making at this point has to be an extremely careful process.

04. Need Prioritization:
Identification of basic needs of the community and prioritising them realistically taking availability of resources into account in order to satisfy these needs, relates to direct formulation of the village development plan. Unrealistic planning may cause management misadventures and end up with disappointment and the eventual collapse of the entire programme.

05. Project Identification:
Income and employment generating projects, which aim to make the programme self-financing at a later stage, will be introduced depending on the satisfaction of a few pre-requisites.

    01. The community should have a solidly established organizational structure.

    02. It should have a successful track record of continuous basic needs satisfaction activities. Village communities are capable of measuring these levels with a set of indicators. In identifying projects a careful study of the needs against availability of limited resources will be made.

Sarvodaya did not start with pre-conceived management systems. The management systems evolved as responses to challenges with the development of the Movement.

The emphasis was not on efficient management to begin with but was on helping people to be conscious of their problems, discover methods and technologies to deal with their problems and help build structures that could be managed with their own resources and know how.

Priority was given for basic needs satisfaction and the skills needed to achieve that objective with self-reliance, maximum community participation and planning for self development. Management was an integral part of the self development process rather than an alien element introduced from outside.

Once the basic physical and psycho-social infrastructures were developed and clusters of villages came into direct confrontation with the social, political and economic institutions at higher levels, formal management systems to wrest advantages to themselves from the elite groups were progressively introduced.

By the establishment of a special structure of the Movement known as the Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services, the Movement now tries to grapple with the macro level established economic institutions so that whatever disadvantages they have imposed presently on the rural sector could be removed, enabling the poorer sectors of the community to get an increased income and improve their quality of life.

As the Movement progresses taking advantage of the democratic and progressive policies of governments, further management structures have to be evolved incorporating into it the main social and political streams of national life as well.

The expressions such as "private voluntary organisations" and "non-governmental organisations" do not quite convey the true nature of Peoples' Organisations or Movements such as Sarvodaya which try to transform the present society to a more equitable, just and peaceful one. To call them peoples'

movements or peoples' organisations is more appropriate. Organisational aspects need managers but the movemental aspects need leaders. The value systems of managers are conditioned by market realities and are not founded on a comprehensive view of human personality, society and nature. Leadership, on the other hand, implies vision, foresight, intuition, compassion and daring that encompasses society as a whole. Peoples' organisations and movements, therefore, will face at one stage or other the dilemma of managers versus leaders. Perhaps we may have to try to create a new 'category' for people-centered development who may be named leader-managers, or manager-leaders who can combine the best of both.

So far I have touched upon the aspects of personality, family and community awakening. But to complete the picture of our vision of a new society I have to mention even briefly our guiding objectives for national and global awakening.

For national re-awakening we work towards five objectives.

1. Re-generation of spiritual, moral and cultural values at all levels of individual, family, group, village, urban and national.
2. Fulfilment of ten basic human needs (pertaining to environment, water, clothing, food, housing, health, energy, communication, education and spirituo-cultural needs) in regard to all human beings, starting from the poorest, the powerless and marginalised and moving towards others.
3. Social development of rural and urban communities mostly through practical and theoretical development education programmes on the following:-
   a) Awareness building of self, society and nature.
   b) Participation in decision making, setting goals and objectives, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
   c) Community organisation in all sectors pertaining to community life.

d) Community education including enlightenment literacy.

e) Health

f) Human Rights and Duties

g) Justice and Peace

h) Nationhood – Building a multi-racial, multi-lingual multi- religious nation.

4. Founding political structures on the following principles:-

a) Participatory democracy and peoples' politics as opposed to party and power politics.

b) Devolution of power to small cohesive people's bodies enabling a process of evolution of power with lateral co-ordination.

5. Complete restructuring of the national economy on the following principles:-

a) Direct the entire economic policy to give priority to people-centered production systems to bring about maximum self-sufficiency locally and nationally in regard to the basic and secondary human needs. (What we mean here by primary human needs are such essentials for carrying on human life as environment, water, clothing, food, shelter, health, energy, communication, education, culture, spiritual and cultural needs. What we mean by secondary needs are things which are required communally such as schools, hospitals, post offices, roads, transport facilities, electricity, irrigation, markets, places of worship and sports grounds;

and tertiary needs are: those which have to be fulfilled at national level – a level higher than the community and sub-district or district level – such as highways, railways, security services, national postal and other communication services, foreign relations, exports and imports and other sectors pertaining to the national economy, national judiciary and

national legislature etc.)

b) Adopt bio-regional planning, respect the eco-system and prioritize production by the masses with appropriate technologies as opposed to mass production with high technology.

c) Provide linkages to the economy with educational and training institutions and facilitate the building up of nation wide, community based, leader-managers who can combine harmoniously values, skills, resources and entrepreneurship.

d) Discard both private and state capitalism and facilitate legislation where, through a system of economic trusteeship, a non-violent transformation towards a just economic order can be brought about and

e) Reject the present dependent, exploitative and unjust international economic relationships and fearlessly build inter-dependent equal and just economic relationships.

This is not the time to go into detailed descriptions of the above five national awakening objectives. So I will proceed to our vision of global awakening.

We often hear platitudinal expressions such as 'we are a global village' 'this space ship earth', 'global environmental crisis', 'common destiny of the human species' and so on. But how many of those individuals and organisations in the development industry who are articulating on these themes are ready to make a personal and collective sacrifice? It gives hope when one is concerned. But without concern being followed up by practical commitment and continuity hopelessness and frustration set in. These end up in conflicts, violence, counter-violence and most brutal violations of the sanctity of life. So it is our belief that people's movements should have clear global perspectives before them if their contribution to human development, justice and peace is not to be wasteful.

In our global awakening programmes we have adopted the following aims:-

a) Enlightened persons and groups in all countries should initiate, develop, strengthen and expand movements for personality awakening, family awakening, rural and urban community awakening and national awakening in conformity with their own respective historical and cultural realities and values with a universal value system in perspective.

b) On the basis of equality and brotherhood these individuals and groups should build close networks sharing their experiences and resources.

c) They should accept the following alternative courses of action based on universal value systems –

   i) Simple life-styles

   ii) Alternative techniques and structures for exchange of products and less energy consuming consumption patterns.

   iii) Cutting across territorial and ideological barriers to build a new society

d) Build and strengthen peace brigades and help in evolving non-violent national defence systems and

e) Extend non-violent direct opposition to all forms of production which contribute to pollute the environment, destroy the ecosystem, lead people to alcoholism and drug addiction and place more and more armaments in the hands of conflicting groups of people or nations.

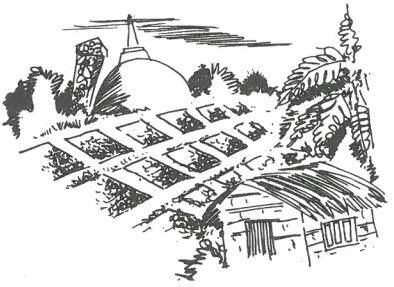
I shall conclude this first lecture with a quotation from Prof. Detlef Kantowsky as it appears in his book "Sarvodaya the Other Development" published in 1980.

".....Sarvodaya is also highly relevant for development thinking in the West. This will only become too obvious during the Third Development Decade, which will reveal the

final collapse of the modernisation paradigm and its related strategies. At the same time it is quite clear that South Asia's development elites cannot admit this. They must defend the foreign-oriented development theories and policies of their respective countries as the only justification for their own relative affluence. The moment they confess that the common man can never hope to attain this type of life-style, they will have to resign. Thus it will take some time yet for the Gandhian concepts to be rediscovered in their country of origin"

I would add to this, one sentence in the context of my country. "Thus it will take some time yet for the Buddhist – Hindu concepts to be rediscovered in the country - Sri Lanka, which was named in the past as a Dharma Dweepa – an Island of Righteousness and a Dhanyagara – an island of economic plenty."

(Speech delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, on Managing by Value and Vision Lecture series (1), at the Asian Institute of Management, Manila - Philippines on September 1990).



Harmonising Processes and Persons with Programmes and Structures to Build a No-Poverty Society

I am happy that during my programme in the Philippines I have been given an opportunity to meet with leaders of private voluntary organisations. I like to thank the Asian Institute of Management for providing me with this opportunity. In the first lecture I delivered before the USAID, P.V.O./E.C.D. Advisory Council I tried to explain our vision of a new society. I am not going to repeat the same here since I believe you have copies of that talk.

We consider development to be an integrated process of total awakening that is taking place within individuals, families, groups, rural and urban communities and the world, bringing about socio-economic, spiritual and cultural progress in one and all. As members of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, we try to encompass all these aspects of human development, whether spiritual, cultural, economic, educational or organisational in our activities.

In a sense, Sarvodaya is a private voluntary organisation. It is incorporated by an Act of Parliament in Sri Lanka with specific goals, objectives and rules governing its functions. At the same time it is more than a private voluntary organisation or a non-governmental organisation with specific objectives to be realised. While it is an organisation with specific objectives and programmes on one hand Sarvodaya is also a Movement for changing man and society through non-violent action on the other. This means it leaves out nothing that affects human beings in society. From the level of the individual, through families, occupational and various age groups, village, urban and national communities to the global community, the Sarvodaya Movement strives to release a series of processes to bring about change.

The movemental part of Sarvodaya is the aggregate of those processes we are attempting to release to transform man and society. The organisational part of Sarvodaya consists of numerous programmes that are systematically identified, developed and intensified. Both the movemental aspects and programmatic aspects need persons, resources, technologies, structures and institutions. All these have to be harmonised to achieve specific objectives as well as to achieve the overall goal we have set before ourselves.

One of the principal objectives of government and non-governmental organisations or voluntary organisations is poverty alleviation or poverty reduction. We in Sarvodaya also subscribe to that; but we do not stop with that. We want to go into the very roots of poverty and its related factors such as powerlessness, alienation, injustice and violence. Therefore, when we attack poverty through the so-called poverty alleviation programmes we also try to keep before us the processes that could lead to our principal economic concept of a no-poverty, no-affluence society. We believe that we should avoid falling into the trap of thinking that poverty is an isolated condition. Poverty of the many is closely linked to the affluence of the few. So are the inter-relationships with other factors that go with poverty. In our Sarvodaya Strategic Plan for 1991-94 we have stated the goal of our national awakening programme as:

> To initiate the creation of and sustenance at village and national level of a Sarvodaya society whose value system is based on Truth, Non-violence and Self-denial which is governed by a participatory democracy, where power and resources are decentralised and where respect for basic human rights and tolerance of cultural, religious and linguistic differences are given pride of place and which moves towards the economic concept of a no-poverty no-affluence society.

The Sarvodaya Movement started as a study service programme where students and teachers were motivated and organised to go and live in villages and work with village

people for their betterment while learning from them. This educational phase soon developed itself into a phase where integrated development of village communities became the primary objective. Even this phase moved into a third phase where the objective was to bring about change in man and society for a total non-violent transformation. The entire Movement has existed for 32 years and now has reached over 8,200 villages directly. Out of a total population of 17 million people in the country at least four million people are organised to different degrees in these villages as participant beneficiaries.

Sarvodaya work in a village normally begins with a Shramadana camp. Shramadana means gift of one's time thought and effort for the wellbeing or awakening of all. The village community is motivated and assisted to organise such gift of labour camps satisfying one or more of their basic human needs, by mobilising human and natural resources in the village. The camp may dig a new well, build a road or restore a public building. The important elements in this exercise are self-reliance, community participation and grass roots planning and implementation. The more important task is not so much the physical benefit but the critical mass of consciousness that is created in the process. This you may call awareness-creation or conscientization or psychological infrastructure-building. Villagers become aware of the dimensions and causes of their problems and decide how to solve them by themselves.

A series of shramadana camps is followed by formation of groups such as of pre-school children, children of school going age, mothers, youth, farmers and other occupational groups. This social infrastructure building leads to linking each group to identify and satisfy the basic human needs as applicable to them. For example: Pre-school children need nutrition, health-care and psycho-social development. So, under the leadership of mothers' group, a pre-school or child development centre is organised to cater to their needs. Around these three needs so many other activities

get organised and they supplement, intensify and extensify these programmes. Today, Sarvodaya's Early Childhood Development Programme is the largest such programme in the country.

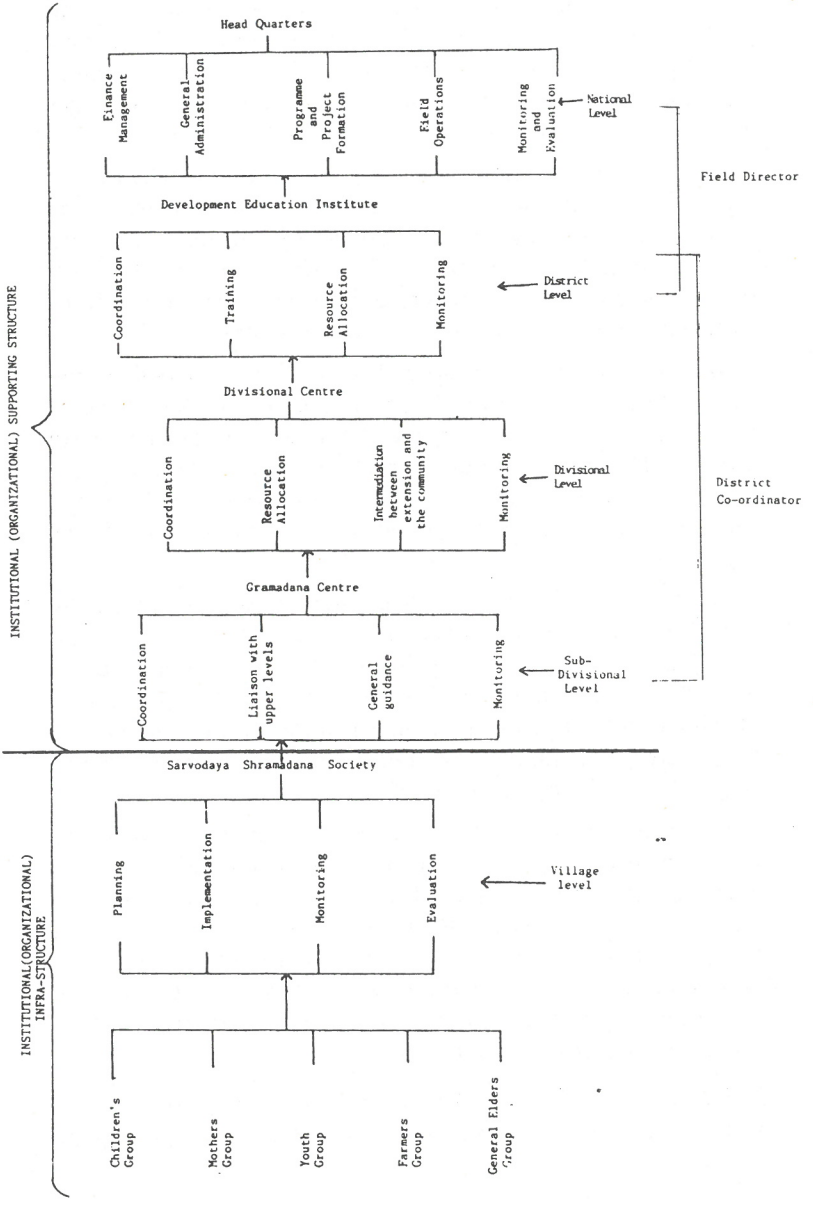
Psycho-social infrastructure-building in a community evolves itself into a village level organisation which we call Sarvodaya Shramadana Society. This is a democratic body where all members of the community above seven years of age can get their membership. They elect their own Executive Council and Sub-Committees to conduct various programmes. These societies are legally incorporated with the government so that they can enjoy the legal status of being an independent organisation within the laws of the country.

All these programmes collectively result in a community awakening process along with individual personality awakening and family awakening. Sarvodaya strongly believes that if we are to build a just and peaceful world these three forms of awakening within individuals, families and communities should take place globally and these basic human groups should be legally institutionalised and empowered with financial and technological resources and know how.

Thus, the need for training in technological skills, financial management, project and programme identification and prioritisation have to be facilitated for their empowerment. Sarvodaya structures from the village cluster level, through divisional and district levels, to the national level are organised therefore not to control or manage these village societies but to educate, train and assist them in their own self-development. The institutional (organisational) supporting structure above the village level should support the institutional (organisational) infrastructure at the village level. This is given in Chart 5.

Now it is time for me to put this philosophy in the context of my country. Sri Lanka is a small island with a population of 17 million. It has a complex social infrastructure due to

CHART 5


Head Quarters
Finance Management
General Administration
Programme and Project Formation
Field Operations
Monitoring and Evaluation
National Level
Field Director
Development Education Institute
Coordination
Training
Resource Allocation
Monitoring
District Level
Divisional Centre
Coordination
Resource Allocation
Intermediation between extension and the community
Monitoring
Divisional Level
District Co-ordinator
Gramadana Centre
Coordination
Liaison with upper levels
General guidance
Monitoring
Sub-Divisional Level
INSTITUTIONAL (ORGANIZATIONAL) SUPPORTING STRUCTURE
Sarvodaya Shramadana Society
Planning
Implementation
Monitoring
Evaluation
Village level
INSTITUTIONAL(ORGANIZATIONAL) INFRA-STRUCTURE
Children's Group
Mothers Group
Youth Group
Farmers Group
General Elders Group

its diversity of climate, topography, religion and race. Several conventional indicators of development and prosperity look encouraging. Literacy is amongst the highest of any developing country at 86.5%, primary school attendance is almost universal and life expectancy averages 70 years.

Yet despite this Sri Lanka is listed as economically one of the poorest of the world's countries where a majority of the people live merely at a subsistence level. 70% are considered to be living below the official poverty line. Of these, one third fail to generate sufficient income to afford sufficient nutrition necessary for good health.

Why is poverty so widespread in Sri Lanka? I believe the answer lies in many interrelated factors, all of which have to be addressed in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty into which so many of our people have fallen. All the socio-economic factors need to be recognised and remedied for the poor to be genuinely empowered to break out of this cycle.

Sri Lanka's economy is overwhelmingly dominated by agriculture. Agricultural exports of tea, rubber, coconut and other crops continue to provide the major contribution towards the national economy, but most of the population at village level derives its income from domestic agriculture, from private smallholdings, and even their owners are not self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs.

The average landholding in the country is less than one acre, which for several reasons provides insufficient yields to generate any cash surplus for the producer to raise his standard of living as he/she would wish. Quite apart from the capacity constraints of such small landholdings, our rural communities face the consequences of very low levels of investment and very restricted access to credit with which to increase their income generation.

There is also, owing to infrastructural weaknesses in the water, road and telecommunication systems and inadequate

supply of cheap energy, difficulty in gaining access to most regions of Sri Lanka. This factor has depressed village economic activity by distancing communities from potential sources of supply and from new markets. It has also removed them from the advances in appropriate technology which can uplift their standards of living. Rural unemployment is unacceptably high in Sri Lanka, which coupled with the severe problems of the sharply increasing cost of living is forcing more and more people into the poverty cycle.

The unrest which arises from a relatively high standard of literacy and education with very poor employment prospects has exacerbated the problems in the country and disrupted the initiatives in economic regeneration.

As I have already indicated, Sarvodaya's approach to economic regeneration in our communities starts at the village level on the smallest possible scale. This is to satisfy the most basic human needs of food, water, shelter, health and education and is done through the instrument of a Sarvodaya Society, formed voluntarily by the villagers themselves. Once the shramadana and group formation activities are completed, we introduce economic initiatives which will uplift the community from a position of dependence and economic hardship to a level where the village is generating a sufficient surplus as a community to be able to lend its economic support to neighbouring communities.

Although the Sarvodaya ideal is a very lofty one in trying to transform man and society globally, still its approach is very local and practical. To build a no-poverty, no-affluence society we have to attack poverty and its causes on all fronts. While we go on with our long term objectives of releasing processes we do not miss the opportunity to create projects and programmes as responses to challenges. Let me give an example.

By the wrong leadership given by political and economic interests in our country during the last five decades a peaceful community of people has been completely disrupted in our

country. They called it communal violence whilst scholars called it ethnic conflicts. For us in Sarvodaya the violence in Sri Lanka was created and manipulated by vested interests who lost control of this crisis management at a certain point of time. Whatever its origin may be we rose up to the occasion. Sarvodaya started an emergency relief programme. This was followed up by a rehabilitation programme. As we were doing relief and rehabilitation irrespective of what caste, race, religious or political groups the victims belonged to we could start reconciliation programmes. With reconstruction and re-awakening we call it a five R Programme. Today this is the largest such programme in the country: helping thousands of victims of war and also educating people as to how to strengthen non-violent forces of our society. Within the Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Re-awakening programmes we have developed programmes such as peace education, peace seminars, peace workshops, peace walks, peace meditations, peace conferences, peace brigades and so on. It is a fully-fledged programme in that sector and is the largest in the country.

Along with the free market economy and liberalisation policies of our government the menace of alcoholism and drug abuse rose to unprecedented proportions. The Sarvodaya Movement has the largest educational and rehabilitation programmes today for the victims of alcoholism and drug addiction.

Sarvodaya realized the traditional leadership given by Buddhist monks and started an institution for training them in community leadership. Today it is the largest organisation of Buddhist monks participating in village re-awakening programmes in the country.

One may call all these as peripheral programmes to the central problem of poverty. But in practice we know that all these are inter-related and are necessary components for a realistic and practical poverty alleviation programme.

Now, if we take Sarvodaya as a whole I can refer to the following main programmes, sub-programmes and projects

which merge into a total programme at micro level or at the level of the village. Similarly we have structured these in such a way that at national levels these merge into macro-programmes.

1. Early childhood development programme
2. Domestic community technology programme
3. Community based rehabilitation programme
4. Sarvodaya economic enterprises development programme
5. National awakening programme

The above five programmes are supported by specific programmes dealing with:

1. Emergency relief and rehabilitation
2. Development education
3. Community health
4. Women in development
5. National peace and amity
6. Evaluation and research

I will outline these programmes for you to provide an overview of all our activities in Sarvodaya.

The most widespread evidence of Sarvodaya in rural Sri Lanka is the young women volunteers who implement the Early Childhood Development Programme at the village level. There are almost 5000 of them selected by their village communities and trained by Sarvodaya in the basics of health, nutrition, childcare and pre-school teaching. At present there are about 4000 Sarvodaya Child Development Centres involved in homegardening, health, education, savings and nutrition.

In most of these centres the children are fed at least once a day with about 90% of the foodstuffs originating in the village itself. "Kola Kenda", a nutritious gruel of rice, green leaves and coconut was once considered a low class food fit only for the poor, but thanks to Sarvodaya, it has gained status through promotion in these centres. So much so that

the Ministry of Tourism this year requested that all 5-star hotels should have it available on their menu!

Another Sarvodaya innovation has been the Children's Fair organised under this programme whereby children are provided with a market for their homegarden produce. The income they earn from their sales are then deposited in special Sarvodaya Savings Accounts and are released for the purpose of purchasing school books and other educational necessities that are often beyond the reach of the poor.

Apart from children, the Child Development Centres act as a focal point for women, in particular those who are mothers, to gather and act collectively in their interest. The Centres train village mothers in child care, and also in income-generating activities such as sewing, farming and trading to be in a better position to relieve their poverty and provision in their families.

Another Sarvodaya Programme that has a major impact upon the poor rural family is the Domestic/Community Technology programme which has as its goal the improvement of technologies used in rural homes and communities. Through this programme Sarvodaya joins with villagers on a self-help basis to build wells, gravity-fed water systems, latrines and other physical infrastructure. Some other technologies that are introduced include the fuel-efficient stoves, bio-gas, food-processing and preservation and small scale bio-farming techniques.

Sarvodaya enters a village with its technical inputs only after the village Sarvodaya society members have prepared a survey plan and prioritised their needs. Thereafter they have to mobilise themselves for collective action and be prepared to donate their time, effort and thoughts in a Shramadana Camp. This village level planning process is a tool used by Sarvodaya to foster community decision-making, problem-solving and future orientation.

An important part of Sarvodaya's no-poverty no-affluence approach to development is to reach village societies with

economic and income-generating activities. Priority is given to promoting the formation of farmer and producer groups to create collective economic power and to venture into non-traditional areas for women in the villages.

Sarvodaya's Economic Enterprises Development Services or 'SEEDS' provides a savings and credit scheme to make low cost small scale finance available at village level to the poor. Since the money is given to the village society to manage and disburse it provides a training in accounting, record keeping and generally stimulates participatory activities within the village society. In addition by training small scale producers in management and entrepreneurship, the Economic Programme seeks to increase the viability and diversity of rural enterprises and to increase collective efforts to ensure improvement in the standards of living of the targeted rural poor. Later in this lecture I will give a more comprehensive account of SEEDS.

The Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme fills in the gaps that exist in the state's welfare programme for the physically handicapped, orphans and elders. Sarvodaya has set up a network of homes at which those who can be rehabilitated are trained for a livelihood. Village volunteers are trained to identify, locate and assist the disabled who are marginalised because of their poverty to get treatment at state institutions.

There are presently 23 institutions managed under the Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme. One example would be the Vocational Training Centre for the Handicapped that provides handicapped young women with training in shorthand, typing, industrial sewing and other courses with self-employment in mind. Another institution for the blind locates and assists blind people in the community to become useful and productive and not be a burden to their families. First the blind are given a practical training to carry out routine daily activities by themselves. Thereafter they are given a vocational training in such areas as weaving chairs and mats, making coir ropes, brooms and sweetmeats and animal husbandry on a small scale.

The four major programmes described above may be described as the professionalised community development aspect of Sarvodaya with quantifiable and measurable inputs and outputs. However we are cognisant of the constraints of finances that limit our capacity to directly alleviate poverty. Sarvodaya's unique strength as a social movement and a development organisation lies in its ability to remake the psycho-social infrastructure of the country without which the massive financial inputs for development from the government and foreign aid do not bring benefit to the lives of the majority.

The government's poverty alleviation programme provides an apt illustration of this point. When it was initially formulated it was designated as the government's foremost priority and was intended to reach all food stamp holders consisting of about half the population. The programme was expected to cost approximately Rs. 35 billion. However since this figure constituted nearly a half of the government's expenditure budget, following the election it was decided that the poverty alleviation programme should be implemented in stages at a cost of Rs.3 billion per year. This cut back was made in the context of resource limitations. Nevertheless, the outbreak of armed conflict between the government and a separatist group led to a supplementary budget of Rs.5 billion being allocated for defence.

It is in this context of violent disruptions to social life and development, and of differing priorities given to the goal of poverty alleviation as opposed to other goals, that Sarvodaya's National Awakening programme must be seen. We consider this programme to be the essential one that builds the human base, the psycho-social infrastructure, which is the foundation of all development. This programme creates the general environment within which community development programmes may be implemented.

The National Awakening programme combines several diverse aspects of Sarvodaya's work into a comprehensive programme. It recognises that Sarvodaya's most valuable

contribution to Sri Lanka lies in its distinctive capacity to unite people of all ages, ethnic groups and political affiliations from the grassroots up throughout the country. Therefore the movemental aspect of Sarvodaya manifested in mass mobilisation is the primary aim of this programme.

Sarvodaya's time tested means for mobilising the energies of people is through shramadana or sharing of labour camps, the philosophy of which is summed up in the Sarvodaya saying that "We build the road, the road builds us". In practical terms shramadana manifests itself as a village-level activity planned and executed by the community. Generally the shramadana is directed towards improving the village physical infrastructure that serves a common need such as a road or pre-school or an irrigation channel.

Last year alone about 4000 camps ranging in duration from 1 - 7 days were held with a participation of approximately 400,000 person days. The total cost of conducting these camps was in the region of Rs.7 million with the communities covering over 50% of the cost. The value of the work done is estimated at about Rs.17 million. These figures do not include all the shramadana work that is done by other agencies, including governmental ones, as a result of the popularisation of shramadana by Sarvodaya. In fact among Sarvodaya's most worthy contributions to poverty alleviation in Sri Lanka would be its success in bringing concepts such as shramadana, village awakening, community gathering and people's participation in development within the mainstream of the country's development vocabulary.

Another very important mobilisational activity carried out by the National Awakening programme is the series of peace marches that commenced in 1983 after widespread communal clashes. The first march was from the sacred city of Kataragama in the south to the northern city of Jaffna. The march captured the imagination of the country, and hundreds of thousands had made arrangements to participate in it, but the march had to be called off when the then President of the country requested the marchers to suspend their march on the

second day, as he proposed to call an All-Party Conference to solve the conflict.

Sarvodaya peace marches have as their primary purpose the healing of fractured human relationships and empowering people to stand together without fear even in hostile situations. Peace marches exemplify Sarvodaya's efforts to remake the psycho-social environment within which poverty alleviating political and economic developments can take place. Since 1983 fourteen peace marches where a total of about 300,000 participated were conducted.

Apart from these five major programmes which have been outlined, Sarvodaya has several short term and experimental programmes. The Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation programme is an example of a short term programme which has been periodically extended due to the unfortunate events in the country.

When the country plunged into communal conflict in 1983, relief and reconciliation became two of Sarvodaya's priority areas. Emergency relief supplies were rushed to refugee camps. Sarvodaya also used its network of centres in the north and east to distribute food, temporary housing material and spread the message of reconciliation both inside and outside the violence affected areas. Today as well Sarvodaya is having an extensive relief operation for those who have fled their villages due to the on-going armed confrontation. Sarvodaya services those areas where war is actually raging along with the International Committee of the Red Cross. What is noteworthy is that Sarvodaya is the only organisation that is able to work in all parts of the country, and that too without the internal dissension that has even wracked the Christian Church to which both Sinhalese and Tamils belong.

The other subsidiary programmes may be briefly described in the following terms. The Development Education programme seeks to develop community leadership skills that are relevant to village life by conducting the training in the village itself. The programme also seeks to impart an education to the trainees that will lead them to a total

personality awakening. The Community Health programme is an experimental one at this time and has the goal of involving village people in the implementation of integrated health programmes. In addition, it focuses on preventive services and promotes a better integration of people with the government health services.

The Women-in-Development programme has the goal of improving the effectiveness of Sarvodaya's development work with women. It seeks to ensure that women who form over 75% of Sarvodaya's paid and volunteer cadre are better represented in decision making positions, and to train village women in areas such as income generation, planning and management.

I will now focus on SEEDS (Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services), established in 1986 as a separate division to manage economic and income generating projects at village level. This was done in order to group together professionally qualified and experienced personnel trained in small business development, accountancy and banking skills necessary to implement our ambitious plans.

It was given the responsibility to take-over the development of our village societies at so-called stage three ie. after shramadana and group formation. It created two complimentary programmes addressed at resolving two of the most fundamental constraints to small-scale economic development, namely, the limited access to training in economic management and the limited access to rural credit. Remove these two barriers and you have opened the door to poor people otherwise excluded from income-generating activity.

The provision of a professional training network was arranged by SEEDS with the formation of Management Training Institute or MTI opened in 1987. The provision of credit was arranged through the launch of a savings and credit programme called The Rural Enterprise Programme or REP in the same year. These two programmes are closely interlinked and formed the core activity of Sarvodaya's income

generating initiative at village level. SEEDS also runs an important third programme to generate funds for Sarvodaya by generating profits from a portfolio of small and medium scale businesses. However, since this programme is not directly but only indirectly related to poverty alleviation I do not propose to discuss this programme further in this forum.

Before explaining MTI and REP it may be valuable at this stage to elaborate a little upon the traditional availability of credit in rural Sri Lanka, and upon its far-reaching effects in the perpetuation of the cycle of poverty.

Sri Lanka's rural population has long been dogged by the problems caused by exploitation and land fractionalisation. Therefore, income has been insufficient to cover consumption needs. Consequently, villagers borrow to cover their costs, often at prohibitive interest rates, causing a compounding cycle of indebtedness.

The main source of credit in the village is from the village business man, more commonly known as the Mudalali. This type of credit carries very high interest rates which inflict severe financial and often social burdens on the borrowers. A typical profile of loans released by Mudalalis would be, for unsecured loans a sum of Rs.100/- at an interest rate of 10% per day, or for secured loans a rate of 20% to 40% per month. Until recently no banking institution was offering any credit in Sri Lanka on an unsecured basis whatsoever. The commercial banking sector addressed itself only marginally to the needs of village producers. Their main focus remains on larger scale urban-based enterprises. Few rural poor are eligible for credit, or know and understand procedures for application.

A regional rural development bank has been established with the specific aim of reaching this sector. However, much progress has been politically motivated, rather than methodically trying to introduce an appropriate credit scheme for the poor.

The Thrift and Credit movement is one organisation that has been actively participating in rural credit. Nevertheless, the volume of loans given for income generation is very small compared to the demand. As the loans are strongly linked to savings, often loans are restricted to employees with fixed salaries.

Practically, therefore, actual benefits at village level as yet are minimal.

The monopolistic position of the Mudalali moneylender further allows him to exploit his borrowers by trading in their goods, paying them low prices and taking exclusive control of sales and distribution to market those goods, owing to his privileged position as the only villager able to afford his own lorry to transport goods to market or to trade them in his own shop.

Sarvodaya's Rural Enterprise Programme recognised the desperate need for low-cost small scale loans to be available in economically depressed villages. We believed in doing this that such credit would create immediate and substantial employment opportunities at a relatively small capital cost. We researched and sought the advice of other like-minded organisations and devised five objectives for the programme in consultation with village representatives. They are :

1. To encourage the savings habit in the Sarvodaya societies.
2. To improve the money management capability of the society and its members.
3. To generate a sustainable increase in the income generated by existing businesses in the village through credit and training.
4. To initiate new businesses in the villages through provision of credit and training.
5. To generate income for the society to cover costs of social development within the village.

These objectives illustrate again how closely interconnected are the savings and credit programme and the training

programme. If REP was to succeed, then it needed the services of our management training institute to prepare the development managers, providing leadership in the drive towards economic upliftment. MTI's key objective was to identify and evaluate the business and management training needs of both the village Sarvodaya society and of the Sarvodaya infrastructure at Head Office, District and Divisional levels in order to deliver the most appropriate savings and credit system to the village.

Now I should let you know the broad structure of REP programme followed by an outline of the type of loans we make to society members.

In brief, the spread of personnel in REP is highly decentralised. At Head Office there are only eight staff, namely the Programme Director, his Deputy, Chief Accountant, Regional Supervisor, Accounts Clerk, two Administrative Assistants and a Secretary. Each of the 16 District Offices is operated by a Secretary, a District Project Manager supported by an Assistant Manager, Accountant, Accounts Clerk, Training Officer, Business Development Officer, Agricultural Development Officer and Secretary.

The Sarvodaya Field Director and District Co-ordinator, who operate the Sarvodaya non-economic programmes are also included in the programme for co-ordination and are paid a small incentive on attendance at meetings, and production of reports.

At field level, attached to each district office are field workers. Recruitment is effected according to the number of "divisions" – each division comprising 20 Shramadana Societies. There is one project Divisional Manager per Division.

The impact of the field worker on the development of the programme is critical, since it is this contact which makes or breaks the outreach to the villages from Sarvodaya District Centres. She/he is the bridge that links the community of which she/he is a part and a set of larger forces for change.

Because of the closeness of the Sarvodaya worker to the people and the contacts she/he develops with the community and village organisational structures, she/he is ideally placed to affect and influence change. At the moment there is a total of 600 villages in Sri Lanka participating in this savings and credit scheme indicating its rapid growth since its launch in 1986.

Our training programme places very heavy emphasis on this key link, and has offered over 200 residential courses to society officers and Sarvodaya field workers. Before REP starts in any village, training is given on society management, book-keeping, reporting, decision making, loan applications and entrepreneurship.

Savings and credit section managers are trained in accounting, loan and cash control, and divisional project managers also receive specialised training in communication, needs identification, repayment and arrears procedures and skills transfer.

Now I will give you an idea of the loans we make to villagers. To apply for a loan a villager must be a member of Shramadana Society which has reached the 3rd stage of development. He/she must have established a savings record in the society, which may be an account of only Rs. 100 but which must indicate some savings discipline and absorption of the training we have offered.

Loan applications can be for simple consumption needs such as wedding or funeral expenses or the purchase of a cow, or they can be for income generation. Consumption loans can be granted at society level from savings accounts but income generating loans derived from donor funds must be approved by the village committee and passed up to district level for final approval. Provided sufficient funds are available this is usually granted.

The maximum loan size is Rs. 5,000/- (or US $ 125 roughly equivalent to 3 months average salary) and the interest rate, which is set according to guidelines by head office, is 20% per annum for income-generation activity. The term of the loan

varies according to the type of economic activity being undertaken. Therefore, REP harmonises the demands of repayment with the time when the borrower expects to be able to repay – an important development which adds greater sales and marketing power to the producer since he/she has a greater degree of choice over when to harvest and market produce or to complete manufacture and sale of goods.

The easy access to REP loans, the personal service through the field worker, and of course the very attractive interest rates have made REP very popular. The market demand is insatiable, and the programme has been limited only by the availability of the funds in the revolving loan fund rather than by operational or structural constraints.

The security of the loan fund has been safeguarded by the presence of three funds. These are:

(a) **Deposit Security Fund**

To safeguard the depositors from the danger of losing money, a fund has been formed by the District REP. Every society should contribute one percent of its monthly deposit for this fund. The money in this fund can be used for the security of such members in future.

(b) **Liquidity Fund**

To help the society face the problem at a time of sudden withdrawal, the society reserves 25% of the total deposits and this amount is deposited with the district REP office to be used under such an emergency.

(C) **Loans Security Fund**

All the members who take loans from the society must contribute 1/10 of the loan amount to this fund. This money must be deposited in the name of the society with the district REP.

The variety of activities funded is vast, ranging from cottage industries like mat weaving to skilled trades such as welding, wood working, masonry, and bicycle repair to agricultural

projects like farming, fruit and vegetable production and animal husbandry.

Virtually every small scale economic activity in Sri Lanka is represented somewhere in the portfolio of about 9,000 loans.

I hope this has given you some idea in the short time available of the activities undertaken by SEEDS in its two key programmes on poverty alleviation.

As I know you will all agree from your own experiences elsewhere around the world, it is essential to keep modifying development programmes to correct mistakes, improve viability, management and monitoring, and above all to make them truly responsive to the needs of the poor. This is never an easy task, but the way we have approached it in SEEDS has been to try to push decision-making authority downwards to village level as far as possible and to avoid the dangers of a top-heavy hierarchical structure which is detached or removed from village life.

We have a substantial advantage in our village and district infrastructure in Sarvodaya, in the strong linkage of our staff to the communities in which we work. But we have also modified SEEDS' structure since 1986 to establish separate divisions specialising in one programme each in order to focus exclusively on their development and on monitoring of our work. Several foreign monitoring missions conducted on behalf of our donors have also been very helpful in providing a fresh outside perspective to tackle the most challenging problems we faced, not least the massive disruption to all economic activity during our last three years of civil unrest and violence.

We have also decentralised managerial authority substantially to district level, encouraging regular meetings and policy planning seminars to take place so that programme changes are stimulated in a 'bottom-up' fashion rather than being imposed from head office in Colombo. Everywhere in SEEDS programmes, group activity has been encouraged not just to create cohesive social fabric in the village with which to

change society, but also for the practical economic reasons to create collective purchasing, marketing and selling power amongst groups of producers.

Formation of 'govi haulas' or 'farmers groups' is now a very important activity to adapt the traditional social structures to suit better the needs of the smallest landholders and improve their income generating opportunities. We also emphasise formation of groups as a precondition of loan applications, in common with other successful micro-level loan programmes. This encourages group responsibility for repayment, interdependence, and a faster and more efficient revolving of our funds between one borrower and the next.

The REP programme needs to reach a sustainable level whereby its running costs at district level are met by the interest payments it receives from the revolving fund. We plan over the next budget period from 1991-94 to reach substantially towards the level of what the experts call 'critical mass' when our revolving fund is sufficiently large and efficiently managed to be fully sustainable in this way. We are already about one third of the way there and are confident that our goal is achievable, particularly if we can increase our partnerships with local banks, as we do in Kandy district, which are sympathetic and committed to rural credit. Perhaps most important of all, our responsiveness to the need of our villagers has been shown in the launch of a brand new programme which started in May, 1990.

As I have already explained, in 1987, SEEDS' Rural Enterprise Programme was started in response to the enormous demand for economic development in Sarvodaya villages. Initially, villagers stated that access to credit was their major constraint. Results have shown that through the village's savings and credit sections, many villagers have achieved an increase in income, and a lessening of their personal debt.

However, through field experience, REP field workers state that rural producers are not achieving their potential for income generation due to lack of technical, business and marketing expertise. Rural markets become saturated due to

lack of diversification; production capacity is not maximised; available resources are not utilised. In many cases it was apparent that the client had inadequate information on production processes, market demand and business techniques.

Consequently, extension services were initiated by REP to supplement and support the financial inputs. Small satellite units in agriculture, agro-processing, marketing and business training were started on an ad-hoc basis.

Now these have been incorporated into a larger programme called Rural Enterprise Development Services (REDS), which is an integrated, advisory extension service primarily for REP borrowers in six districts in Sri Lanka.

REDS' General Objective is to increase the number, diversity and profitability of viable Rural Enterprises within REP and ensure an improvement in the standard of living of the targeted communities.

This can be broken down into the following specific objectives:

- identification, development and promotion of new improved marketable products;
- development of an effective, sustainable advisory service;
- generation of knowledge and implementation strategies for small ventures that can be shared with other rural development organisations;
- development of capacity to identify and develop viable solutions to the problems of rural enterprises;
- generation of knowledge and mechanisms for promoting collective enterprises.

The programme works with the same formula of trained extension officers working with Sarvodaya Society borrowers at village level to build up the business and technical skills of these groups. Emphasis is placed in development of non-traditional crops and products to provide alternative and/or supplementary income to producers. REDS therefore operates

very closely to REP in approach and support of new ventures and expansion of existing enterprises.

In drawing together a conclusion of Sarvodaya's poverty alleviation projects through its economic division SEEDS, we have tried to be led by villagers rather than by policymakers, by people's needs rather than by convenient resources.

We are only just starting on the road towards genuine empowerment of the poor in our country. The blight of poverty is not diminishing. On the contrary, despite our efforts and those of many other organisations like us, poverty is increasing, fast.

However, the greater the obstacles to abolishing poverty become, the harder is our resolve to conquer them. I still believe that our people-led approach is the one most appropriate to our country's needs. Development starts in ourselves as individuals.

We must stimulate personality awakening which amplifies to the family, rural and urban communities, and we must provide close networks to share skills and experience and create economic opportunity. Above all we must be led by those who recognising their predicament as poor people ask us to help them escape poverty and to improve their lives and those of their community.

Our efforts may only be small in relation to the extent of our countries' difficulties in conquering injustice. But even the smallest-scale success in a single village carries with it the potential for replication to the whole of society. That success should therefore be for us as developers, reward enough.

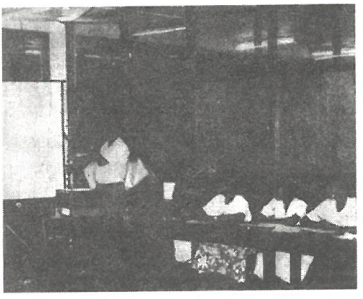
As one Shramadana Organiser recently said

> You say you have waited two years for the government to clean that canal. You can keep on waiting while your fields bake. But where is your own power? You won't find it sitting around till the government does it for you. Your power is not in Colombo; it is in you, in your heads, and hands. Open your minds to this reality.

This description of Sarvodaya's programmes illustrates the fact that it cannot be simply described as only a project or programme based organisation. There is a movemental aspect to it that cannot be quantified but which reaches into the lives of ordinary people in all parts of a country that is otherwise racially and politically divided, disintegrating and impoverished.

We are convinced that no amount of macro-planning and financial inputs by themselves can repair the damage and bring political stability to the country. On the contrary, its psychological, moral and social fabric which has been torn asunder will have to be woven together again, patiently and carefully. We believe that this can only be done through a countrywide network of developmental approaches – spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political, a movement of micro-processes, building themselves into a nationwide macro-process of total national regeneration.

(Speech delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, on Managing by Value and Vision Lecture Series (2), at the Asian Institute of Management, Manila – Philippines in September 1990.)



Transformation of Vision into
Reality-Planning for Development (Awakening)

This is the third and the final in a series of talks I have been asked to deliver by the Asian Institute of Management. I am conscious of the fact that the audience today consists of legislators and many other eminent persons in the decision making stratum of Philippine society. This makes the task more difficult for me as my conception of development may be quite different from what you are familiar with. I believe you will bear with me if I express thoughts and objectives which may seem highly idealistic to you. When we talk of Managing by Value and Vision we cannot escape being idealistic. However, we have to be idealistic without losing sight of practical manifestations of these ideals in the realities of the present global situation.

Development to us is an awakening process. It involves much more than bringing together factors of production for the most efficient utilisation and management of resources and enabling the products to spread out as evenly as possible so that most or all in society get the benefit out of it. Awakening involves ideals and thoughts, and a vision that is the noblest human consciousness can absorb. The translation of that vision into practice also demands adherence to very high values. The ultimate end of this vision, values and practices should be to facilitate the highest joy of living for the individual as well as the society as a whole.

I come from the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya means awakening of all and Shramadana means sharing of one's time, thought and effort to awaken all.

This awakening which is for a noble end has to follow noble means. Therefore, in true awakening or true development there cannot be a contradiction between the ends and the means. So the means we adopt are non-violent, truthful and self-sacrificial in nature.

This ideal is translated into practice in over 8,200 villages in Sri Lanka. How we tried progressively over a period of 32

years to develop this thought and practices was explained somewhat in detail in the last two talks I delivered, the copies of which you may have already received. What I am going to speak on now will have to be understood in the context of what I said in the two previous speeches.

In this talk I am going to share some thoughts with you as to how Vision could be transformed into Reality. The fundamental problems pertaining to poverty, conflicts and environment have not yet been solved in any country by any of the development philosophies and strategies that have been tried out during the century that is coming to an end with the closure of this decade. I do not challenge the fact that there have been immense advances made in various frontiers particularly in the spheres of knowledge, science and technology during this period; but when we see before us over a billion of our brothers, sisters and children suffering in abject poverty and also when we witness joy of living evading even the most affluent societies in the world, we have to question whether we have made the right use of our researches and advancements in the frontiers of knowledge.

Development is first and last about human beings. When human beings have alienated themselves not only from themselves but also from their social and natural environment in spite of all the needs and wants having been satisfied, then we have to realise that something has gone radically wrong primarily in our thinking about development. When that thinking goes wrong, everything else also gets out of hand. Instead of the human mind and its aggregate consciousness controlling and guiding in the right direction the processes it has generated, other forms of non-sentient or material forces begin to take control of human society, its economic and social systems and institutions limiting the capability of human beings to guide their own destiny.

Therefore, if we accept this fact then development planning should first concentrate and give priority to human personality awakening. Our definitions of quality of life have to be radically changed from amassing goods for material

consumption to giving greater scope for the individual human being to strive for self-realisation. If we can make every single human being from the youngest possible age wanting to ask the questions "Who am I? How did I come to be? What is my being? Where am I going? What makes me happy or unhappy? Is there anything absolute and unchanging in my body or in my mind or in the mind-body combination of others? Outside human beings or other living beings is there anything else in nature which is unchanging and absolute? What is my role in this world, in my family, in my place of work, in my community and in the global society? Is there a life after death?"

If a human being does not find satisfying and relevant answers to these questions such a human being will fail to attain the joy of living. All development will come to nought unless human beings strive to achieve this self-realization.

Today, in Columbia there is a war going on in which the biggest military power in the world, the United States is also involved with the Columbian Government. The root of the conflict or the cause of the conflict was drug trafficking. Drug abuse has become one of the principal problems in the world. Some countries even covertly encourage and depend on the influx of foreign exchange from drug trafficking to keep their economies going. You may have heard of the 'Golden Triangle' where notorious centres for drug trafficking have been established. There is no doubt today that drug trafficking is closely linked with the armament trade; buying arms for terrorist activities is as easy as purchasing any other commodity in the international market if only you know the right people and the right cartels to contact.

In this manner we can link up drugs, armaments, terrorism and several crimes to problems of poverty, conflict and environmental crisis. In your own country, in my own country, we do not have to do much research to understand this problem. Now, how could you talk of development or improving the quality of life of human beings, turning your back to this question? I do not have to go into the problem of

AIDS or 40,000 children dying from malnutrition daily in the age group below 12 months. I do not have to talk about thousands of refugees within their own countries as well as those who migrate from one country to another. Development philosophers, administrators, planners and implementors cannot any longer ignore these facts and shirk their responsibilites and treat with indifference the critical importance of personality - awakening in any planning for development.

May I make an impassioned plea to you all as legislators, administrators and others belonging to the elite society in Philippines to look at development and development planning afresh. Perhaps I can contribute some thoughts from our Sarvodaya experience in Sri Lanka on this rather than continue to speak on the beaten track bringing in per capita incomes, gross national products, rates of growth and so on. If development should be conceived as an awakening process, I repeat that, this awakening process should take place at three levels. The first level is at the level of the individual, the family and the cluster of families, may be numbering 100 to 150 families which we call rural or urban community groups. For the sake of clarity let us call this the primary level of awakening. The secondary level is where such communities are integrated together as national communities. Let us call this the secondary level of awakening. The third or the tertiary level is global awakening.

If we consider rural and urban community awakening as two separate sectors then along with the individual, family, national and global awakening there are six inter-dependent and inter-related levels at which we have to look as human beings to bring about this total awakening. If we look at the processes from an institutional or structural perspective six other inter-related and inter-dependent areas can be identified, integrated and harmonized with the national awakening process. They are:- the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political and economic aspects of life as they affect various human beings at the six levels ranging from the individual to

the global community I referred to. While we help to motivate, mobilize, organise and institutionalise human beings at these levels they have to be awakened in all these six sectors beginning with the spiritual.

In planning for awakening or development we have to be conscious of the limitations placed upon us by the bio-sphere, eco-system and the psycho-sphere. By bio-sphere I mean that portion of the earth from the bottommost part of the ocean to the topmost part of the earth where life can occur. By eco-system I mean the inter-dependent biotic and non-biotic components on earth. By psycho-sphere I mean the sum total of psychic energies released by human beings the critical mass of which has an influence on our thinking processes. In real planning all these factors have to be taken into consideration. (See Chart 6)

Lord Buddha in His teaching 2,600 years ago vividly explained the importance of human beings adhering to certain cosmic laws. All planning, production and consumption have to be done without violating these cosmic laws. He referred to the

> Cosmic Law pertaining to Seasons *(Utu Niyāma)*
> Cosmic Law pertaining to Biological or Genetic Order *(Bīja Niyāma)*
> Cosmic Law pertaining to Natural Phenomena *(Dhamma Niyāma)*
> Cosmic Law pertaining to Mental Phenomena *(Citta Niyāma)* and the Cosmic Law pertaining to Cause and Effect in the Moral Conduct of Human Beings *(Kamma Niyāma)*.

When we delve deep into these five Cosmic Laws and relate them to the global problems we face, we can clearly trace the causes to the violation of these Laws.

We cannot do realistic planning unless we recognise the patterns of energies created by the inter-action of these Cosmic Laws. Some are caused by human beings while others are caused by other forms of nature. Human beings, the most

CHART 6

BIOSPHERE - PORTION OF THE EARTH WHERE LIFE OCCURS
ECO-SYSTEM - INTER-DEPENDENT BIOTIC AND NON-BIOTIC COMPONENTS
PSYCHOSPHERE - SUM TOTAL OF PSYCHIC ENERGIES RADIATED BY HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS
COSMIC LAWS GOVERNING HUMAN LIFE

A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK -
PLANNING FOR AWAKENING

advanced of the living world have to develop their perception to see these patterns for sustaining dynamic stability and maximisation of harmony and happiness.

In other words, we can look at the gap between the rich and the poor, prevalance of hunger, disease and ignorance, disruption of eco-systems and environmental pollution, prevalance of bloody conflicts and wars, violation of human rights and terrorism, prevalance of incurable diseases such as AIDS and Cancers as conditions that have been brought about by imbalances caused by the violation of these five fold laws.

It is for this reason that we have to define development as an awakening process that takes place in the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political lives of human beings, the family, rural and urban communities, the national community and the world community. It is from this stand point that a variety of awakening processes under generally used terms like health, nutrition, education, income generation and so on have to be viewed and planned. It is only with such perception that we can put welfare and development projects and programmes into an integrated and inter-dependent system to bring about a qualitative impact on human beings, society and nature.

According to the prevailing conditions in our societies we should be able to develop a philosophy which is both universally and locally acceptable. Based on this philosophy we can determine our goals, study our resources, plan out our strategies with participation of all concerned and then implement them. Within the Sarvodaya Movement we are trying our very best to get these ingredients into our planning and implementation processes. This is human being centered participatory development. Sometimes this is called bottom up development.

Now let me examine how the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka is translating these ideas into practice so that all the portfolios of activities we are doing merge into one total national awakening process.

The first principle we follow is to generate an evolutionary process from the level of people living as communities in rural and urban areas. These people are mostly from below the poverty line. The Sarvodaya movement helps them to realise that if their physical, mental and emotional energies are harnessed based on certain values such as sharing they can improve their quality of living. A large number of labour intensive activities which satisfy one or more of their basic human needs are accomplished in this manner.

At this stage the main thrust is to bring about an awareness into their own personalties of the socio-economic realities in which they live and the nature around them. It is an educational process which is very functional. Organisation of the community into groups such as pre-school children, children of school going age, youths, mothers, farmers and occupational groups and relating them to basic human needs is the second phase of this evolutionary process.

This psycho-social infrastructure building phase is followed by providing necessary training in literacy and skills which helps the community to reach an institutionalisation stage. The village level society is organised, legally incorporated and assisted with certain means to carry on with their work of self-development. At this stage they are also given training in various organisational and income generation skills and also the seed money to get into formal economic activities. As this process was described in detail in the previous lectures I will not repeat them here.

The second principle we follow is to release an integrational process between societies which are close to one another or in one village cluster. This increases their capacity to co-operate in a wider geographical area as well as on certain economic and social tasks which cannot be done at the village level.

During the last two decades the Sarvodaya Movement developed a large number of co-ordinating and development education centres. All these activities were co-ordinated at the national level with a well established central co-ordinating unit at the Headquarters. We felt that as much as we believe in

complete decentralisation of Sarvodaya activities at the level of the village and urban community, at the national level too there should be not one but several independent supporting organisations with devolution of power. So the third principle we followed is devolution of power. Today in addition to the central organisation the following specialised structures at the national level have been created for:

(1) welfare activities (2) women in development (3) economic enterprises (4) peace and reconciliation (5) relief and rehabilitation (6) household and community technology (7) evaluation and research (8) child development (9) development education (10) community health

Now over three decades we can see the transformation of the planning processes at Sarvodaya from the micro to the macro levels in accordance with the principles outlined above. When Sarvodaya commenced its work in the poorest of Sri Lanka's villages in 1958 planning was a relatively straight forward affair which limited itself to one particular village at a time. Our goal at that time was to introduce the shramadana concept and show the village people that if they organised themselves, then through their own collective efforts there were several infrastructural improvements they could make to their village. Together with the villagers we would perform a survey of village resources. We would then analyse what needs could be satisfied using only village resources and what needs would require outside resources. On the basis of this available information, the villagers would then plan out with us how they could satisfy these needs and in what order of priority.

Through this very simple planning process, the village people would discover that as a community they possessed a great deal of resources that were lying unutilised. They would have idle land to put up new buildings such as a pre-school or community kitchen to feed the children, they would have excess power sources to use in hauling bricks and mortar such as their livestock consisting of buffaloes and bullocks, they would have government extension services which were not being properly directed towards the village, and most

important of all they would have their excess human energies, both mental and physical, which could be utilised to bring all these factors of production together for the development of the community.

In those early years, the most common outcome of the village level planning process was the totally self-reliant construction of access roads, pre-school buildings and the repair of village irrigation tanks. This was of course followed by the dynamisation of community life as the village people were brought to a realisation of the immensity of their own strength and their ability to improve their standard of life independently of external financial or material assistance.

Thirty years later, while conditions in the country have changed considerably and market relations are much more pervasive thus increasing the opportunity cost of voluntarism, the shramadana concept retains its power as an engine of community development.

This approach to development differs sharply from the conventional concepts practised over the past several decades in Sri Lanka. During the past decade the government has been investing massively in major irrigation and power generation projects. But by the side of gargantuan dams are parched fields that poor farmers owning small plots of land watch disconsolately and with mounting discontent. Under the electricity lines which carry power from the dam to the cities and factories live people who have no permanent structures to call homes, and hence are not eligible for that electricity. Neither have they had a voice in the decisions which spent so much of their country's resources, nor have they benefited from it.

Most of these expensive, capital-intensive and large-scale projects have not alleviated the burdens of the vast majority of poor Sri Lankans living in the villages. The gap between the rich and poor has widened so that the poorest 40% who received 13% of the national income in 1973 received only 7% by 1985 whereas that of the richest 10% increased from 27% to 50%. Ecological costs have been high resulting in

unprecedented flooding and earthslips that have once again worst affected the poor who live close to the banks of rivers and on hill-sides.

But what is even more disturbing, large-scale development requires highly centralised control which is at complete variance with the culturally, socially and economically heterogeneous nature of the Sri Lankan people. This has alienated sizeable communities of people and seriously eroded democratic checks and balances. It is when people feel they have no part in decisions that affect their lives that more and more violent forms of social and political change begin to emerge. The past decade has seen upwards of 50,000 people dying in armed revolts that emerged in the northern and southern geographical extremities of the country born of desperation in the youth of every major ethnic community.

Sarvodaya's attempt to provide a long term answer to these crises has been two-fold. First, we have strictly avoided any association with party politics. We have, of course, joined hands with governments in spearheading or supplementing their development efforts that have been in harmony with our own principles and programmes of work. But we have been resolute in refusing to engage in partisan political endeavours. This has deprived us of formal government patronage and funds and sometimes, in the short run, lead to unpleasant encounters with the political authorities. But in the longer term we believe this strict political non-partisanship has given Sarvodaya a place of respect among the general population and even among the politicians who, while they may not love us, do respect our independence. Thus, during the southern insurrection of 1987-89 when governmental structures collapsed in most parts of the country and even NGOs were asked to stop working by the rebels, Sarvodaya alone continued its work without interference from either the rebels or the government forces. Similarly, today, in the midst of the bitter fighting in the north, land mines, pressure mines, mortar attacks and helicopter attacks, Sarvodaya workers are free to move up and down the country in the pursuance of their duties.

The second component of Sarvodaya's answer to the country's multi-faceted crises is to completely involve the people themselves in deciding on their plans and priorities. From the initial micro level planning for individual villages based on the shramadana work camp that had its origins three decades ago, Sarvodaya has remained faithful to its early commitment that the individual and the village should never be sacrificed or compromised in the quest for a more comprehensive macro-planning scheme.

When you look closely at Sarvodaya structures you will observe that as a people's development organisation we have built up a structure which can interact constructively with governmental organisations in two ways. One is with different levels of government structures from the village up including the national level. The second is in different sectors of development such as health, education, environment, peace, relief and rehabilitation and so on.

'How can a government and a people's organisation cooperate with each other without going through a confrontational approach to attack the problem of poverty and its related factors?' is a question that we have to ask seriously at this time. Neither the governments on their own nor the non-governmental development organisations by themselves can successfully find solutions to this problem. We have to be honest about certain key issues pertaining to poverty if we are to co-operate.

If we define absolute poverty as the lack of adequate income or capability to meet the daily requirements of minimal caloric and nutritional consumption, then low income people of Asia particularly in South Asia are in a state of absolute poverty. The gap between South and South East Asia perhaps with the exception of the Philippines is also increasing.

Absolute poverty is also characterised by landlessness, lack of assets, and productive employment, illiteracy and ill-health, low life expectancy at birth and high infant and under five mortality rates and low per capita food consumption. Natural

disasters such as cyclones, droughts, floods, land slides and other environmental shocks, political instability, violent outbreaks of communal and religious conflicts, civil wars, high population growth and a mounting number of war refugees make the situation worse for the poor.

Governments, inter-governmental agencies and the World Bank formulate and implement strategies for poverty alleviation or poverty reduction. Non-governmental organisations and social change movements such as Sarvodaya also try to alleviate or reduce poverty. But there is a difference. The Movements target for more than mere crisis management. They want to remove the causes while tackling the effects at the same time. For example, the Sarvodaya Movement works towards the goal of not only a no-poverty society but also a no-affluence society.

We believe that poverty, powerlessness and related conditions are directly linked with affluence, imbalances and injustices in the exercise of political and economic power and other advantages enjoyed by the few over the many. Both conditions must simultaneously be transformed. What is necessary is not palliatives but a strategy for a total non-violent revolutionary transformation. The more the governments and other advantaged groups overlook the urgency and fail to grasp this non-violent possibility for building equity and providing opportunities for disadvantaged people the more will be the chances for violent conflicts and terrorism to spring up and escalate.

Most governments are now committed to alleviate poverty taking certain corrective measures such as

- land reforms
- easier credit facilities
- increased provision of technical know-how to upgrade factor productivity in land, labour, capital and managerial sectors
- better primary health care and female literacy facilities
- progressive changes in the macro-economic framework to increase growth.

In the same way on the advice of the World Bank they also do structural adjustments. The real need is for structural transformation but very little is done in this regard.

Non-governmental development organisations and people's movements are unnecessarily feared by most political leaders and bureaucrats.

Their ability to reach the poorest, to mobilize, organise and empower them is perceived with suspicion and envy. This blurs their vision of reality and most often they fail to realise the critical role people's development movements can play complementary to the government to help the poor and the powerless to move to a position of no-poverty and to build democratic decision making power over policies that affect their lives. During the last three decades we have experienced this phenomenon which has had not only a negative impact on Sarvodaya's poverty alleviation efforts but we have also witnessed the fate of those politicians and bureaucrats who failed to get a right understanding of what we were doing. But the worst is their negative attitude towards this non-violent transformation of society contributing in no small measure to nurture violent revolutions on the one hand and to promote even unintentionally the anti-social elements who have today threatened the very foundations of civilized life in my country on the other.

During the last fifteen years Sri Lanka has passed through vast changes. A value-centred way of life that people generally enjoyed has suddenly become money-centred. The sanctity of life and moral principles which were generally accepted lost their respected place in society. Family ties were loosened and communal harmony was disrupted. Peace that prevailed in every nook and corner of the country was suddenly no more and killings and counter-killings and finally militarization of the country and terrorization of people became a reality. Human rights of citizens were openly and blatantly violated by all parties who carried guns. A democratic way of life was to become only name and form and not precept and practice.

A government policy committed to quick industrialisation and modernisation resulted in creating pockets of unprecedented affluence in cities while pushing further below the poverty line half of our population. The textile industry is a classic example. In this industry the largest sector was the handloom industry and prior to the open economy employed 70,000 persons directly and indirectly. The industry was protected and sustained by a series of controls and regulations. With the open economy the controls were removed and this source of employment in their own localities was completely lost to the people. Presently in my country about 1.2 million people out of a labour force of about 6.5 million people are estimated to be unemployed.

Most developing countries have been lured by prestigious projects offered by rich industrialized countries with soft loans or grants. Quite apart from the national debt burden the expected benefits for the poor have yet to come from these multi-million projects such as the Mahaweli in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka 90% of the rural households live in the Wet Zone which has only 30% of the total arable land. Ninety one percent of the Wet Zone tenants have less than 2 acres for cultivation. Fragmentation of land with joint inheritance and soil erosion create serious problems to them.

In the dry zone settlements we see the strange phenomenon of poor households leasing out land to rich town based entrepreneurs who own tractors and boutiques and who are also money-lenders. This is done because the poor settlers do not have the means to cultivate the land themselves. The original intentions of the big settlement programmes in Mahaweli and other places have not been realized. Greater inequalities in assets and incomes have been created.

Multi National investors have been allowed to lease more than 84,000 acres of land in the wet zone where people of the soil became wage labourers. Tea, rubber and coconut estates owned by the government cannot absorb the young educated

unemployed youth in those areas. In the South and South-East parts of the country large tracts of land are owned by absentee land lords.

In exploitative situations of this nature where landlessness and lack of assets prevail it is not possible to build a true sense of community where people have ties to the land. No development of skills is possible. The poor and indebted migratory and local wage labour cannot be the right kind of human resource to launch sustainable development. So the foremost requirement is economic and social justice to these people while self-employment can be a temporary measure.

How can the experience of Sarvodaya and the trust and confidence it has built with people be carried forward to give a new dimension to national planning? This is the crucial question we are facing today.

Sarvodaya has followed a non-confrontational approach as far as the government is concerned. In all those areas where Sarvodaya believed that the government was doing the right thing we co-operated. Persuasion, education and success are much better tools to be adopted when governments monopolise development policy.

In this manner the movement is able to achieve a critical mass of consciousness not only among the participant-beneficiaries but also the general public, the administrators and political leaders. Then influencing public policy and collaborating for development with the government without losing autonomy becomes possible. Today the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka has more or less attained this stage of maturity.

As this level of relationship with mutual respect, dignity and independence we can collaborate with state agencies so that the latter's vast resources can be put to better use to improve the quality of life of people. To consolidate this position both NGDOs and governments have still to go a long way in areas pertaining to social distribution of power, control and accountability, balance between micro and macro approaches,

flexible institutional arrangements and most of all the values and vision for social change.

Within a climate of trust and openness NGDOs can participate in policy making and have access to information. Particularly in the fields of environmental and ecological sustainability, social forestry, utilization of the right kind of technologies, primary health care, credit for the assetless, people centered institution building and net-working, and maximisation of the cost effectiveness of projects and programmes geared to the satisfaction of basic and secondary needs of people, the collaboration between government agencies and the NGDOs can make a radical difference to planning and implementation of development projects. It is my belief that the recognition that is now given to the private sector by governments should be extended to the people's participatory sector also so that all these three sectors can have checks and balances while collaborating together for the common ideal of the awakening of all.

> According to Prof. Denis Goulet, well known development philosopher, "amidst these changes for Sarvodaya to have survived as a large social force, while preserving basic integrity in the values, motivations and purity which characterised the early more 'heroic' phase of the Movement is Sarvodaya's greatest achievement. The quality of decision-making and action which constitutes the innovative and valuable element in participatory Movements everywhere must survive the temptations and the destructions wrought, in the usual course of events, when that quality must now pass the test of quantity i.e. when large scale takes over. Nevertheless, if participation is to influence decision-making at a level where it makes a difference in development, transition to the macro-arena must be made. Needed for this transition are new ways of thinking about participation".

No national planning endeavour is going to be complete without considering the role of international development co-operation in these three sectors viz. the governmental,

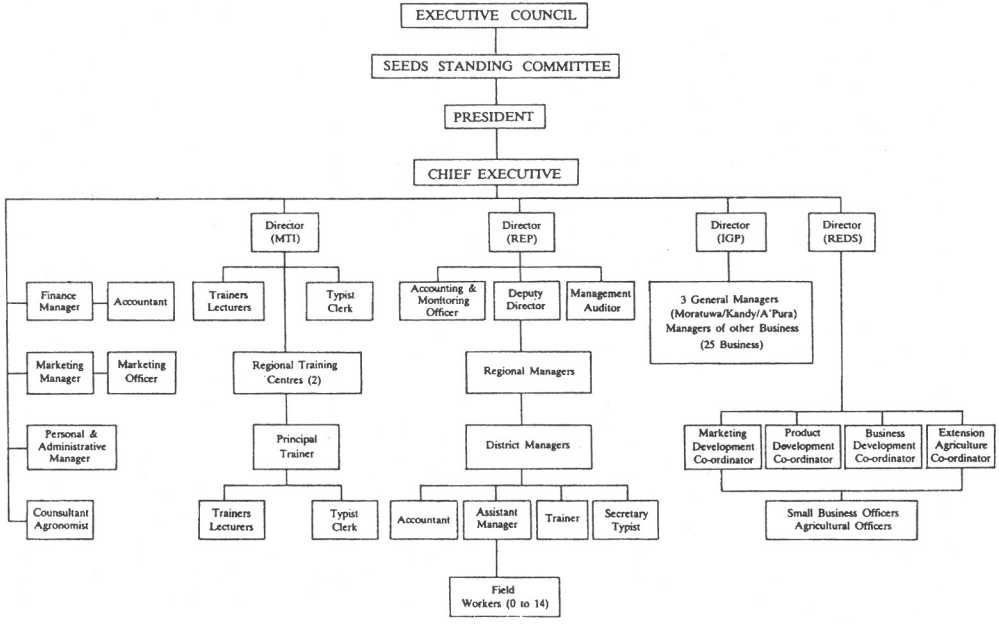
private and the people's participatory sector. The most important consideration here is how the North and the South together perceive the global situation as a whole and complement the efforts to face global disputes. We know that at this moment more resources from the South, financial, natural and human, are transferred to the North than what is received in the South by way of trade and aid. The people's organisations in the North have an important role to play in pressurising the establishments in the North as well as informing the establishments and the people in the South as to the reality of technological and other resource transfers.

Most of us, in spite of our reliance on local resources for self-development considerably depend on non-governmental development partners in the North for financial assistance. Generally they take decisions pertaining to this co-operation through dialogue; but the dominant tendency is to make Southern NGDOs effective and efficient development agencies within the status quo rather than people's participatory movements for social transformation. There is no difficulty in obtaining financial support from these organisations and even big financial institutions such as the World Bank for purely economic oriented or employment creation projects rather than for programmes designed to bring about a removal of the causes that bring about poverty and powerlessness.

I am not saying that that kind of institution should not be established and every possible co-operation obtained. As a matter of fact the Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services with a Management Training Institute, Rural Enterprise Programme, Income Generation Programme and Rural Enterprise Development Services Programme find no difficulty in raising the necessary funds to carry out their activities. (See chart 7). But such programmes should be made to be an integral component of a human awakening programme and a sustainable programme for total awakening of human beings and society.

CHART 7

ORGANISATION CHART FOR SEEDS



To recapitulate I would like to make the following remarks:-

(a) Our Development Planning should be aimed at transforming our vision of a new society, where all have an opportunity for total personality awakening.

(b) Development should cease to be a privilege of a relative few while underdevelopment continues to be the lot of the vast majority.

(c) By helping to awaken the spiritual, moral and cultural values in individuals, families and community groups along with social, economic and political transformations, hope in humanity for a world free from human rights violations, denial of basic human needs, nuclear environmental and ecological hazards, should be kept alive.

(d) As much as human inter-personal relationships must have an ethical foundation, development which touches every facet of human life and society should have an ethical, humane foundation in decision making and implementation.

(e) Priority should be given to the satisfaction of needs over wants and production by the masses over mass production.

(f) Development is not a mere manipulation of resources; but awakening people into establishing structural and institutional justice along with improved behavioural changes and

(g) The true task of national development or awakening is the abolition of all forms of alienation of human beings from themselves and their economic, social, political, technological institutions.

Permit me to conclude with a re-emphasis on human personality awakening. Human beings should be at the centre of all development activities. But one can imagine the variety and types of persons needed for participatory development to

function. These persons are not only those who work within the organisation or the movement. Those with whom the workers have to interrelate such as government officials, political people and resource partners or donors also come within the purview of the harmonisation process.

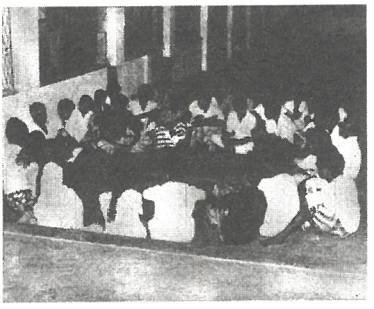
According to my experience a vast organisation like Sarvodaya in spite of set backs from time to time was able to progress towards its goal due to the vision and values that were always kept alive. To us the human being, I repeat, is the first and the last objective of development.

One's personality is inseparably composed of both mind and body. The mind and body have to be supplied with material and mental nutrients from the time that the child is conceived in the mother's womb. Today, we are more worried about birth controls, family planning and abortions and so on, without giving due consideration to those children who will definitely be born and how their total personality is going to be affected by the psycho-social environment in which the mother and the family function. This is an area where both the necessary spiritual inputs and material inputs are required. In the national planning exercise I would, therefore, bring in spiritual resources to the maximum practical manifestation to fill a void that is well seen in modern societies. Sometimes a psychologically imbalanced child can go through youthhood to adulthood and even become a very powerful person in the fields of politics, administration and positions of using coercive force like being commanders of armed services.

If we look at the Asian, African, Latin American or even the European or North American societies during the last few centuries we can easily identify large numbers of such people who appear to be normal, but who were really abnormal, yet extremely clever leaders in their own field. Historians have recorded their political atrocities but very few biographies or accounts of the psychology behind these brutalities have been written or brought to light. Healthy psychological development is not only applicable to leaders. This is true of all human beings. That is why if development is about people, and if all

people begin their lives not in a test tube but in a mother's womb then social planning which does not expressly plan for human personality awakening will not stand the test of time.

(Speech delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, on Managing by Value and Vision Lecture Series (3), at the Asian Institute of Management, Manila – Philippines on September 1990.)



Community Education for a Learning Society in the Context of Asian Heritage

It is an honour that the International Community Education Association and especially its Asian Chairman Prof. Ramlal Parikh, have bestowed upon me by inviting me to this first Asian Regional Conference. I would also like to thank our hosts in Malaysia for all the kindness and hospitality provided for us in this friendly and beautiful capital city.

At this Conference we are going to deliberate on "Community Education for a Learning Society in the context of Asian Heritage". Underlying this theme are three important assumptions we have made:-

1. There is an important educational activity taking place as community education in our societies.
2. Our societies should be learning societies, and
3. Education and learning have to be perceived in the context of our Asian Heritage.

Asia gave birth to founders of all the world religions. They were all known as teachers. They were the Gurus who set in motion community education processes which enriched not only the Asian cultures but also the world civilization in general. Therefore, when we think of Asian Heritage their spiritual contribution comes foremost to our minds.

Depending on the understanding of the spiritual teachings of the great teachers, different rulers who wielded power at different times prior to the colonial era, provided our peoples with either justice, peace and progress or injustice, war and retrogression. During the colonial period, however an aggressive Christian missionary zeal with expansionist western commercialistic waves swept across Asian countries. Now, in the post colonial era we in Asia are trying to find our bearings amidst appalling poverty affecting the majority of our peoples while a few are enjoying affluence. Poverty does not exist in isolation. illiteracy, ignorance, disease, drug addiction, alcoholism, crimes, terrorism, civil wars and human rights

violations are an integral part of this vicious circle of which poverty is one component.

The challenge before the community educators, I believe is to attack this vicious circle in such a way as to release constructive processes to liberate our peoples from these evil forces. To do this successfully we have to go back to our Asian Heritage and re-discover our roots pertaining to our vision of life in relation to society, nature and the universe. This vision will help to re-energise us in the modern world for maximum well-being and happiness for all.

It is from this vision and values we have to perceive problems, decide on our goals and objectives and develop community educational strategies and programmes. The greatest tragedy in our times, I would say, is the lack of a shared vision and values. The greatest contribution we in Asia can make to the global community is to provide this vision and values.

Learning takes place within human personality. Human personality awakening is the primary objective of learning. What is meant by personality awakening has to be decided by various individuals and societies depending on their value systems. Education in all its multifarious forms such as formal, informal and non-formal education is the endeavour of human societies to facilitate learning according to the vision and values a society has with regard to individual, family and community well-being. If a society has a shared vision on these aspects such a society is qualified to be called a learning society.

Asian heritage comes down from great civilizations which flourished in countries like Egypt, India, Greece and China and a large number of small countries. The present generation should have the enlightenment to get the best values and thought systems from this heritage which are universally applicable.

A Vision of Reality

The developments of ancient times that lead to the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabaratha. Illiad and Odyssey were part of a larger pattern of social and cultural revolutions throughout the civilised world from India to Greece and China. So the Asian heritage is really part of a shared world heritage with both convergence and divergence.

Then, as now, institutions and values were collapsing and arising under the pressure of more complex forms of economic and political organisation. Then, as now, these hardships intensified earlier speculations about the great questions of humanity that religion alone dared to answer: the meaning of the self and the world, the origin and order of the universe.

But an equally important, if somewhat undervalued, aspect of religion is to provide a vision of reality shared by the members of a community giving it a sense of cohesiveness and direction. This includes values and perceptions, thoughts and practices on which the community organises itself to face problems and find solutions.

There is no question that religion played a major role in structuring societies in traditional Asian kingdoms. Thus, recent scholarly research has revealed that both in their territorial and internal designs, the kingdoms of South East Asia such as Sukhothai in Thailand, conformed to a "Mandala" scheme expressed in geometrical and radial constructs of satellites around a centre. At the centre would be the king as the pivot of the universe and the upholder of Dharma.

This cosmological design led to the "Mandala" system being applied to even architectural and administrative arrangements. The most conspicuous example was provided by the princes who resided in front and rear palaces around the king's own palace. The all pervading impact of religion was such that the royal harem was not impervious to the "Mandala" pattern.

In pre-colonial Sri Lanka too a religious vision was provided by the Buddhist philosophy with its Five Precepts, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Theory of Dependent Origination, Laws of Karma and so on. This vision was generally shared by all from peasants to rulers. Of course, the level of perception of this reality by each individual would have differed. But what they shared would weld them into a single community.

We can contrast this situation with the reality of modern life in industrial societies. There the isolated individual amidst the lonely crowd struggles to create from scratch, as it were, a philosophy of life that gives meaning to his or her own life. At its worst, separation and conflict are the result.

Individuals have a deep rooted need to feel they belong to some group or the other. But with the acceleration of social and economic changes, population increase and migration into cities this sense of belonging gets seriously eroded. This accounts in part for the ethnic revival in every part of the world. It is by belonging to a community that the individual with a limited temporal life span can seek self-transcendence in the continuous life that the community provides. But this assurance of continuity was once provided by traditional religion which tranformed fatality into continuity and chance into meaning.

The traditional thought always viewed the world we live in against the background of the entire cosmos. I remember how I was taught in my youth that there were five dynamically related processes that affected the world. They were called the Five-Fold Laws of the Cosmic Order, namely the Laws of Biology, Seasons, Natural Phenomena, Mental Phenomena and Cause and Effect.

But with the advent of rationalism about the 16th century and its gradual triumph in the Western World, the unseen cosmos was rejected and the individual was made the first reality. Upto about this time we can say that the Asian heritage was not so much different from the Western

heritage. But now with the so-called scientific and rational thought, that split life into discrete and analysable categories, came the great divide.

The modern view led Western man to act as if his life was absolutely autonomous, at best in principle. Of course, human beings have always found it difficult to submit to the demands of social life. But the specific characterstic of modern individualism is that it is considered to be the norm.

Material acquisition, expansion and competition have been the outcome of this Western outlook which has over the past century exerted the most powerful influence over the planet. Western society, and the politically and economically dominant segments of Asian society as well, have institutionalised the very values that in religion are known as deadly sins, namely greed, pride, selfishness and hate. Such is the world we live in where crimes against humanity, whether in the battlefields of Sri Lanka, the ravaged cities of Kuwait or the starving land of Ethiopia, are accepted as an unavoidable part of life. This is the reality of today's world that community education guided by Asian heritage must seek to change.

Community Education

Community education concerns people. To me it is a process in which people become awakened to the individual and collective lifestyles they can realistically achieve, depending upon the objectives to be achieved, take cognisance of the value systems under which they may choose their strategies, become conscious of their needs and resources, strengthen their organisational and institutional structures and move towards an improved quality of life. In other words, community education as I am defining it is not merely about integrating the poor into an inequitably structural society in which wealth and power are very unequally distributed. On the contrary, it is an all-embracing approach where literacy and other functional skills become integral components of a comprehensive strategy for the total transformation of human beings and society.

In reflecting on the meaning of community education we should endeavour to keep in mind the fact that people are not objects of development to be fitted into this or that input-output table. The human personality is immeasurably more important than labour which is only a part of human personality. From this perspective social development has more significance to the quality of people's lives than capital accumulation, although that facilitates material growth. Hence, cultural identity and value systems are more important to people in a community than entrepreneurial skills. The provisioning of material life that vocational skills make possible is undoubtably important. Mahatma Gandhi said that to a hungry man God would appear in the form of bread. But often I wonder whether in our rightful concern to solve the unemployment problem we give priority to man as a factor of production and not as a complete human personality.

We need to take a fresh look at our techniques for romoting development. For instance, literacy has become n indispensable tool for every human being in present day ociety. But even this basic skill is denied to a quarter of the vorld's population over 15 years of age. Illiteracy does not xist in a vacuum but is part of a vicious cycle of derdevelopment. From my experience in Sri Lanka I have cluded that there are three levels at which this vicious of ignorance, poverty, disease and human rights tions need to be tackled.

ie first two levels I have in mind are ordinary literacy in h the ability to read, write and count are imparted, and nd, functional literacy which facilitates the joining in the nomic mainstream by providing people with technical, agerial and organisational skills.

ut at the deeper level is what I would call enlightenment acy which raises the awareness of disadvantaged people arding the society they live in, the causes of their verty, the existence of structural impediments and gives nphasis to self-enquiry. Without enlightenment literacy,

development can come to nought, because people may find themselves void of fulfilment in their lives.

In the past, commuities learnt by audio-visual means, memorisation and intuition. These three forms of learning had highly developed systems of practical programmes. In particular, the intuitive aspect, which is no longer a part of modern education, was developed through the practices of contemplation and meditation. We see this total approach to education in the ancient pirivenas, gurukulas, vidyapitas, pesantrans and terrakoyas.

These education programmes were formulated and implemented in such a way that everybody was included. It was community education for all. Few would have been literate in letters and numbers in the modern sense of the word. But they were neither peripheral to the mainstream, uneducated nor unskilled. The farmer knew about his seasons and crops. There was no category of people called the educated unemployed, rather there was "Education for life, through life and throughout life," as Mahatma Gandhi once said.

This was because the economy was not a highly manipulable one controlled by unseen managers and interests, but was a people's economy, decentralised, understood and controlled by the greater part of the population.

Practical Transformation

Permit me now to give an illustration of what I have said above, drawing upon my experiences with the Sarvodaya Movement of Sri Lanka. Sarvodaya means the awakening of all in every aspect of human life at the levels of the human being, the family, the village, the town, the city, the country and the world community. This awakening is composed of six aspects of integrated development. They are spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political and economic. For a world where peace, justice and prosperity will prevail we believe that

human beings and society should awaken simultaneously at all these levels.

In contrast to centralised and top-down development models, Sarvodaya aims to strengthen small communities of people so that they can take up more and more of the responsibility for their own development. Sarvodaya supports this development through a carefully selected set of specialised educational and technical services designed to reach the 8000 odd villages in which it has its programmes.

The village communities which Sarvodaya enters go through five stages in their educational process. The first stage is that of psychological infrastructure-building. It begins quite simply with a village-level discussion about local needs and organising self-help activities. Villages enter the second stage of social infrastructure building when they have formed one or more groups of farmers, mothers, children, youth and children. Several formal training programmes are conducted for people whose communities are at this stage of development, and include community leadership, pre-school teacher training, community health, women-in-development, legal aid and awareness, savings and management courses.

The third stage of this community education process is a very important one. At this stage the community is organised to satisfy its own basic and secondary needs. In addition, the community groups are brought together and institutionalised as a legally incorporated body which is entitled to open its own bank account, obtain loans and start economic activities with support from district and national level Sarvodaya structures.

Communities in the fourth stage are expected to become self-financing in their Sarvodaya activities and they assist neighbouring communities as well in the fifth stage. As they go through these stages the four principles that Sarvodaya emphasises are those of self-reliance, community participation, planned action and networking. Thus, clusters of neighbouring villages are encouraged to legally incorporate themselves at the cluster level, divisional and district levels and build

themselves up into a national force supported by the organisational and managerial framework provided by the Sarvodaya Movement.

Awakened Personalities

Sarvodaya considers the village and urban community, of face-to-face dimensions, to be at the centre of human personality development. This is because human beings cannot reach into the depths of their personalities in isolation from the world. To do this they need the help of their fellows.

It needs only a little self-awareness for us to realise how pre-occupied we are with ourselves. In the natural person everything seems have an immediate self-reference. The instant reaction of normal human nature to any event or news is to wonder "How does this affect me?" The average person is far more distressed by a mishap to himself than by a major calamity in even an entire nation's life.

The commoner forms of selfishness do not excite comment. We take it for granted that we should monopolise a conversation, take the best seat and get the better of the bargain. Usually this is out of fear that we will be left out and unwanted. This fear can best be addressed in small communities, where face-to-face interaction which makes possible a meeting of hearts can take place. But this fear is accentuated when people aggregate together in large numbers, and do not form a community.

In most of Asia, and also Africa and Latin America, the small community is at the periphery of development. Instead the centralised state remains the most potent bastion of power, status and privilege. Within these overgrown state structures and impersonal bureaucracies are to be found the imperative of authoritarianism and the logic of macro-level decision-making that violates human rights.

Excessive power when it is wielded by morally frail human beings, which most of us are, creates alienation and anti-democratic tendencies. Or else the ploughing under of

wheat harvests and the piling up of butter mountains in one part of the world while people in another part starve is inexplicable. The truth is that what the individual human being will shrink from doing personally is done easily enough impersonally when done through big structures that distance human beings from the consequences of their actions.

The global crises we face, whether in growing economic disparities or in the destruction of the biosphere, reflect values and goals that have to change. Their viability in a crowded, interdependent and ecologically vulnerable world is being questioned by nature itself. We have to shape our community education programmes to re-assess our values as citizens.

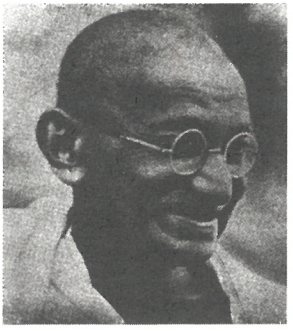
The question is whether this re-assessment is possible at the institutional and structural levels only and without a prior transformation at the level of the individual and local community. I do not believe that institutional or structural transformations can be achieved without the individual and small group like the family who form a part and parcel of these themselves undergoing radical transformation.

That is why the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka has given priority to the awakening of human personality within the psychological and social environment provided by the family and local community. Sarvodaya's community education work involves engaging in open dialogue with people, mobilising village communities, training young leaders and forming community groups. Through these processes involving personal change Sarvodaya very quietly but surely strengthens those grassroots and intermediary institutions which are the best guarantor of freedom, democracy and the widespread enjoyment of the fruits of the economy.

Difficult though this might seem at this juncture in world history, I believe a breakthrough is possible provided we all recognise the importance of the revival of spirituality in human beings and society. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that whatever educational programme we conceive should have a deep spiritual approach to life. If we can create a critical mass of spiritual consciousness where every human being and human group can realise the value of beneficence,

love and enlightenment for true joy of living, I believe we will have opened up the path to a more just and contented world society. My sincere hope is that these few words have shown that community education in the context of Asian heritage has a foremost role to play in this process.

(Keynote Address delivered at International Community Education Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 1990 Sept. 17)



1990 Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values

With deep humility, and on behalf of my brothers and sisters committed to building a Sarvodaya Social Order in Sri Lanka, I accept the Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for promoting Gandhian values in the world. This Award has a very special significance to us in Sri Lanka. It comes from India, known to Sri Lankans as "Jambudweepa" or "Bharat" the sacred land hallowed by the footsteps of Lord Gautama Buddha. It comes from the land of Mahavira, Emperor Dharmasoka, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Sri Jayaprakash Narayan and many other leaders of humanity. Their influence on our thinking continues to renew and strengthen the affinity between our two countries and peoples, more so at times when our failings seem to pull us in different directions.

With profound gratitude, therefore, I thank Justice M. Hidayathullah, the Chairman of the Board and his Council of Advisors for this selection. At the same time, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the Ramakrishna Bajaj family and Prof. Ramlal Parikh. They were instrumental in inviting me in 1982 to deliver the Kamalnayan Bajaj Lecture Series in Gujarat Vidyapit. Since that time, they have extended to us all encouragement for our work in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

In 1959 when Dr.G. Ramachandran, the Founder of the Gandhigram University gave a lecture in Delhi, I heard for the first time, the word "Sarvodaya" – a word coined by Mahatma Gandhi to give expression to the new society he envisaged for India after Independence.

This word "Sarvodaya" instantaneously reminded me of Lord Buddha's expression "Sabbe Satta Sukhi Honthu" which means "May all beings be Well and Happy". From that day, my vision of a world where Sarvodaya, the Awakening of all, is ensured has inspired me in all my work. Today, in 8200 villages of Sri Lanka, out of a total of

23,000 villages, village people themselves are trying to bring about a total non-violent transformation in their spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political life with their own efforts. Waves of political and communal violence that engulfed our country from 1983 did not deter these communities – Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim from treading our chosen path of Non-violence and Justice.

It is our sincere belief that nothing short of a total transformation in the consciousness of mankind can eradicate hunger, disease, conflict, injustice, war and environmental degradation on our planet. This transformation can be brought about only by a global effort where common and humble men, women and children of the world become the principal agents of such a transformation. This is exactly what we are doing by caring for and sharing with one another in constructive activities. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, leads a way to Peace and Develcpment. By such action, we are creating a critical mass of spiritual consciousness which brings about a humanising and liberating impact on social, political and economic institutions that have enslaved us for decades.

We know, for example, that at the planetary level itself, we are destroying our atmosphere, geological and biological support systems in an unprecedented manner. The source of this destruction springs in the human mind which is the breeding ground for greed and fear. It is this greed to satisfy the five senses that transforms itself into blind and sometimes calculated exploitation of fellow beings and pollution of nature, and creates mass poverty for the many and affluence to a few in unbelievable proportions.

Along with this greed for the accumulation of wealth comes fear which necessitates accumulation of power. How often we know of situations where small coteries of people with well organised cohesive instruments of violent structures and weaponry keep vast majorities of people at bay. When power and wealth get accumulated in this manner in the hands of a few and injustices are done on a

mass scale, the enlightenment of the human spirit ceases to be a noble objective and ignorance reigns in the minds of human beings.

What is the answer? My observations, experience and insights over a period of nearly 35 years of my work have convinced me that the answer lies in Gandhiji's values of Truth, Non-violence, Satyagraha and Self-denial converted into concrete constructive action. I do not believe that these virtues could be centrally organised on a large scale and across the board. But certainly they can be organised at the individual, family and community levels to reach global proportions. The technology that is needed to network these small communities around the world to have a global impact, is today available in our hands. For individual and collective survival, such an awakening of the people should be encouraged, supported and complemented by radical devolution of political and economic power from small coteries of human beings who hold them today to grassroots communities who are languishing in poverty and powerlessness.

Gandhiji's dream of post-independent India as a Commonwealth of Village Republics can today be extended to the entire South Asian region. We should dream of making the whole of South Asia a Commonwealth of Village Republics. If the billion of us who inhabit South Asia take up this challenge of creating a new society from below, where neither poverty nor affluence will predominate, but from where a No-poverty No-affluence Society evolves, then the whole humanity will be inspired by actions motivated by such a vision.

The life of Mahatma Gandhi and his kindred spirit Shri Jamnalal Bajaj whose philanthropic, compassionate and sober life we commemorate today with this Award should be an inspiration to all of us, to undertake this transformation of man and society.

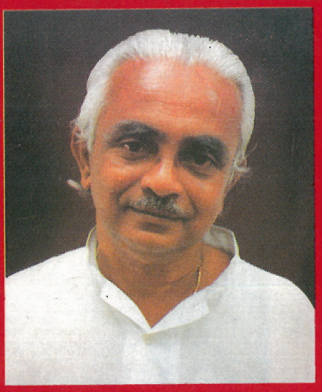
Let us turn our backs to evils of all barriers that divide us as human beings in any respect. Let us look towards global

harmony and justice by awakening our consciousness. Let us build new social, political and economic institutions where human beings no longer need to be motivated by Greed and Fear, but are liberated by Beneficence and Love. Let us rekindle the Mahatma's ideal of a Lok Seva Sangh and liberate ourselves from power-oriented party politics, replacing it with a People's Participatory Democracy.

Let us, as sons and daughters of Bharat and Sri Lanka come closer to each other in this global mission of sustainable awakening for Peace and Justice on our planet.

Thank you.

(Acceptance Speech delivered by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, President, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, at the 1990 Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values in India on November 1990.)



Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne is the Founder/Leader of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka. Four decades ago, he worked in a rural village and together with the people, developed a philosophy and a Movement which is known as Sarvodaya. In it, the awakening of everyone is symbolised. Today it has spread into many parts of Sri Lanka and to some parts of the world too.

Ariyaratne was inspired by Vinobha Bhave and Mahatma Gandhi. Buddhistic experiences in Sri Lanka were added to this inspiration. Today the Movement works for everyone, regardless of race, creed, caste or colour. It is a unique philosophy based on potential greatness of human beings.

In these seven volumes what Ariyaratne wrote during the last four decades are collected. The beginning of Sarvodaya and its gradual development are reflected here. As Ariyaratne travelled around the world the influences he encountered and how he looked at such influences are seen in these volumes. The essays are refreshingly original and they contain what man should do in order to establish peace within himself and with the world. Ariyaratne's essays are a tribute to his spiritual explorations into himself and into the world.

A SARVODAYA VISHA LEKHA PUBLICATION

ISBN 955-599-146-4

Price: Rs. 200/=

VISHVA LEKHA
Printers